

COMIC.

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No. 689. { COMPLETE. } FRANK TOUSEY PUBLISHER, 34 & 36 NORTH MOORE STREET, N. Y.
NEW YORK, Oct. 14, 1885. ISSUED EVERY WEDNESDAY. PRICE { 5 CENTS. } Vol. I

JACK HAWSER'S



BY PETER PAD

T TAVERNIN

The North

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JACK HAWSER'S TAVERN

By PETER PAD,

Author of "The Shortys Out Fishing," "Sam," "The Funny Four," "Joe Junk the Whaler," "Bob Rollick, the Yankee Notion Drummer," "The Shortys Married and Settled Down," "Bob Rollick; or, What Was he Born For?" "Ebenezer Crow," "Stump; or, Little, but Oh, My!" "Chips and Chin-Chin," "Stuttering Sam," "Tommy Bounce," "Tom, Dick, and the —," "Shorty; or, Kicked Into Good Luck," "Shorty in Search of His Dad," "Tommy Dodd," "The Shortys' Trip Around the World," "Tumbling Tim," "Boarding-School," "The Shortys Out for Fun," "The Shortys Out Gunning," "The Shortys' Farming," "Behind the Scenes; or, Out With a New York Combination," "Sam Spry, the New York Drummer," "The Shortys' Country Store," "Joseph Jump and His Old Blind Nag," etc., etc., etc.

WHEN, years ago, I finished the series of stories in which Jack Hawser figured quite prominently, I supposed I had done with him for all time, as I certainly should have been had not the character been a real one and from life.

Jack Hawser was not only a real live character in the stories referred to, but he is a living one to-day.

And so is "Stump," as he is known in the narratives, but who is well known now in the mercantile world as Franklin Slathers, although the friends of his rollicking boyhood frequently call him by his old nickname yet. But he has grown considerably, and is quite a good-sized man, and having grown in wealth also, he is quite a rich man at the same time.

But he isn't my hero this trip, and so I will not bestow much time on him here.

Jack Hawser is my hero.

How many of you remember Jack?

A great many, I dare say, for you used to write me to ask questions about him while the story was running in your favorite paper, and others may remember him from reading THE WIDE AWAKE LIBRARY.

However, I shall go on just as though you had never known him or heard of him.

As before stated, I left Jack still on the briny ocean, after his fiasco at being a "terror"—a bloody pirate of the Caribbean Sea, somewhat humbled after his adventure, especially before those who knew of him and it, but the same "bad man," the same "tarry old sea dog," the same swaggerer as ever before strangers.

Naturally enough, I supposed that the lesson he learned in the pirate business had taken some of the brag out of him, but I guess it never will be taken out only when he is found out.

It appears he followed the sea for several years after I dropped him, but eventually becoming tired of it, and finding that he had a stock of glory on hand large enough to last him the remainder of his life, he concluded to abandon it and try something else for a livelihood.

However, I must admit that I had forgotten almost entirely about my bad sailor man, and might never have

thought of him again had it not been for an incident that happened lately.

It was simply this:

I was riding out one day in the upper part of New York city, not far from the Harlem river, when my notice was attracted to a cozy little tavern I had never seen before, standing a few rods back from the avenue, on which was a sign reading thus:

AVAST, SHIPMATES!

JACK HAWSER'S TAVERN.

COME IN AND MESS WITH HIM.

Entertainment for Man and Beast.

Could it be possible that it was *my* Jack Hawser—*our* Jack Hawser?

His ear-marks were on that brand new sign, at all events, and I resolved to investigate.

He didn't know me personally, and so I would just drive up and see what entertainment he had for man and beast.

As I drove down the walk and neared the sheds arranged for the reception of horses, I heard a deep, gruff voice calling to somebody, the hostler most likely:

"On deck, there, Mike! Pilot the gentleman up to the dock, make his horse fast, swab him off, spread his awning, and see if he wants victualin'."

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the reply of an old sailor-looking sort of a fellow who came limping forward. "Sarvice, sir," said he, bowing, sailor fashion.

"Give him two quarts of oats, put blanket on, and not over four quarts of water when he gets cool enough."

"Ay, ay, sir!" and seeing that he understood his business I turned and walked into an arbor connected with the bar-room, and took a comfortable seat at one of the tables.

A man presently approached me, dressed in the loudest

kind of a sailor rig, and with a roll in his walking that was almost enough to make a person sea-sick.

It was Jack Hawser, and no mistake, but he had grown much older than when I saw him last, but looked, if possible, much more like a tough old sea dog than ever before.

"Sarvice, sar," said he, touching his hat and bowing in a landlordly way.

I ordered some refreshments brought me, but did it so calmly that he must have seen that I was not overwhelmed with his importance, or his astounding landlord's suit.

"Ay, ay, sar," and he turned away.

I had a good chance to watch him while he was filling my order, and there was no one else present just then to detract my attention.

Yes, it was the old sea dog, Jack Hawser, but he had grown stouter as well as older. But I resolved to draw him out a little, to see if he was really what "Stump" had told me he was.

So when my refreshments were placed before me I asked him to join me.

"Will I jine yer? Will a stormy petrel fly?"

In a moment or two he was seated on the opposite side of the table.

I tackled a very well cooked chop. It was evident that he had a good cook, at all events.

"You are new here, are you not?" I asked.

"Yes, sar. Just out of dry dock—new spars, sails, galley an' everything. Advertised in the papers only this morning that I was ready to sail," said he, proudly.

"But you have not always followed this business, I should judge?"

"Lord bless you, no. I've followed the sea all my life. Born on the briny and cradled on the billows, in fact."

"What made you leave it?" I asked.

"Oh, I got tired of it. Been in all parts of the habitable earth; seen all the life, fun and rough adventure I wanted; made a hooker full of money, and so I thought I'd buy this little cabin and spend the rest of my life ashore. I don't expect to make much money here, but I must have something to do and a place to meet my old shipmates when they are ashore."

"But sailors do not often come as far up town as this, do they?"

"Lord bless you, they'll go further to see me, for I have been a roaring, ranting, fighting, drinking son of a sea cook among them all my life. Guess they *will* come out here to see me!"

"And so you are a general favorite, eh?"

"Right you are, sar. Why, Lord love you, sar, I have thrashed nearly every one of them, off and on, yet they love me. I always was bad when I got mad, but they know I'm a good one all the same," said he, looking "bad."

"Did you ever meet a little sailor man by the name of Frank Slathers?" I ventured to ask.

"What! Frank Slathers—little Frank Slathers, that we used to call Stump?" he exclaimed, starting back in a melodramatic way. "Do I know him?"

I nodded.

"Do I know Stamp, once our cabin boy, then owner of the vessel, now a prosperous New York merchant? Well, you will excuse my rough and ready style, or if I should happen to swear during our conversation, for I can't shake

my old sea ways all at once, you know; but I do know Stump!" and here he leaned back and gave vent to a laugh that seemed liable to raise the roof.

Finally he chucked a big quid of tobacco into the spittoon with a thud, and continued:

"Well, sar, I should rather smile and say that I *did* know him. Why, Lord love you, sar, I was the making of that prosperous runt."

"Indeed?"

"Made him! Made him from keel to truck. It was all written up in a book once how I saved his life, got him a berth as cabin boy, protected him against his tyrannical father, and made a first class sailor of him. He was little, but oh, my! he was a good one and no mistake. But I had to thrash the whole crew before they would let him alone, Lord love you. But his grandmother finally bought him a ship, after we had been wrecked once or twice, and he took all hands, from the captain down to the cook, for his crew, and still went as a common sailor, so that he might be among us boys, you know."

"Liked the sea, did he?"

"Lord love you, yes, arter I showed him what it was to be a regular out and out sailor," replied Jack, proudly.

"Have you seen him lately?"

"Not for a year or two. The fact is, he got sorter stuck up arter awhile an' married a girl we found when we war wrecked on an unknown island, and shook the sea. But of course he'll come to see me when he finds out where I am."

"And so he married the girl?"

"Yes."

If this was true it was quite a romance.

"You saw her, of course?"

"To be sure. I was the means of rescuing her from the wild natives. Guess I must have killed about two hundred of them before they would give her up. They sorter worshiped her because she was white and they black. She had been saved from a wreck years before when a child and had been brought up by them. But we brought her to New York, where it was found that she was some big gun's daughter who was thought to be lost, and heir to millions."

"Why didn't you catch on to her?" I asked.

"Oh, I never cared for women, anyhow. I gave her to Stump, as far as I was concerned."

"That was good of you. And so he married her and settled down?"

"Yes, young sailors are apt to do such things, but old toughs like me never do."

"You appreciate freedom, eh?"

"All the time, sar."

"Well, it's a great thing to have," said I, rising to go. "I'll have my horse, please."

"Ay, ay, sar! Stable ahoy!" he called.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Pilot the gentleman's horse up to the gangway."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"I shall be right glad to see you again," said he, as I paid my bill.

"Well, I am out on the road for a drive nearly every day, and I will call," said I.

"Why, Lord, love yeu, sar, I can spin you sea-yarns

day in and day out. I'll be at the wheel here all the time. Come in, and I'll tell you about pirating," he added, aside.

"What! Ever engaged in that business?" I asked.

He gave me a knowing wink, and then, hitching his trousers starboard and larboard, he added:

"Had to have more excitement, you know. Old-fashioned, plain sailin' got to be too tame for an old tough like me. But I'll say nothing about it now. Some time I'll make your hair curl with some pirate yarns."

"All right."

Giving the hostler a quarter, I drove away, well paid for my visit, having found a character I had long lost sight of, and one that would probably afford me some amusement, more especially if his card in the papers proved potent in attracting other characters who had formerly associated with him.

The next day, being out for my usual drive, I could not resist the temptation to stop again at Jack Hawser's tavern, and see if there was anything new going on there, and I was welcomed in the same brusque, hearty way.

Ordering refreshment for myself and horse, I took a seat at a table under the arbor and prepared to enjoy myself.

"Well, how are you getting on?" I asked, as Jack hustled around in waiting upon me.

"Oh, the wind sets nicely on my quarter, and every sail is drawing," said he.

"That is good."

"Lord bless you, sar, I had a big crowd of sea cap'n's up here last night, and I tell you they swept the deck. Jolly old sea dogs, every one of 'em, just like me, and they spent a bushel of money, although they did get a little noisy before morning."

"Old friends of yours?"

"Lord love you, yes. Met 'em hundreds of times in different ports about the world, and they'll cast anchor here whenever they are in New York, you bet, sar."

"Well, I'm glad to hear it."

"Oh, I shall make more money here than I want, I'm sure of that. But if I do I shall give it to the Sailors' Snug Harbor," said he, going into the kitchen to look after my order.

This would have amazed me, had not the hostler told me out under the shed that there hadn't been a soul there since I left the day before. But it wouldn't be Jack Hawser, you know, unless he made his stories exceedingly fat.

But while I was thinking and silently smiling, I saw a buggy turn into the lane and come toward the hotel.

At all events, I was not to be the only customer on this occasion, for the buggy had two occupants, and the hostler was not slow in getting them under the shed and receiving their orders respecting the horse.

I did not particularly notice the two men while they were in their carriage, but as they approached the hostelry I saw that they were Chinamen, one of whom was dressed in sailor costume, with the exception of a white plug hat, and they were both smoking cigars rank enough to break up a setting hen.

"Hello, shipmate!" I heard Jack call, in his down cellar voice. "Luff, luff, yer bugger, and throw us your grapple."

"Hello, Jackie!" answered a piping voice, and then Jack shook hands with one of them.

"Blast my tarry toplights, Chin Chin, if I arn't right glad to see you."

"Me, too, allee samee. How do?"

"A No. 1. Come into the cabin and tell me all about yourself. Where do you hail from, where are you bound, what's your cargo?"

"Ginnie," replied Chin Chin, laughing.

Yes, it was, indeed, the original Chin Chin, of whose adventures you have often read, both in connection with Jack Hawser, and that bright fellow known as "Chips," with whom he tramped from California to New York.

"Of course you are always loaded with gin when you are ashore. But where do you hail from, you moon-eyed tough, and where bound?" said Jack, slapping his back, while the other Chinamen stood back and said nothing.

"Hailie New Lork, no boundie anywhere."

"How is that? Given up the sea?"

"So be. Slailor play lout. Me washie New Lork. No more cookie lon ship. Play lout."

"Oh, you've gone back to your old business again, have you?"

"Bettie you so be. Makie plenty slugar."

"What has become of your wife that used to make it so hot for you?"

"She play lout. Skip with Lirishman un go debel. Me hunklie doley all samie like one bloys," and to express his joy at the release he spoke of he danced a little of that old-time breakdown of his, that had caused so many people to laugh.

"Bully for you, Chin. Come, here is some nice fresh cider. Try it, both of you."

"Bettie yes ebylly time," said he, helping himself.

"How did you find out I was here?"

"Plaper, readie."

"Good! Well, here's the old times in sweet cider."

"So go!" and they smacked their lips over the cider. "How gettie long?"

"Oh, big! Coining money, Chin, old boy; I got tired of sailing, and thought I'd try something on land. Have you ever seen Tongs?"

"Me no. Tong too slam bang, knockie head loff. He go prison."

"Is that so? Got on one of his old fighting jams, I suppose."

"So be. Knockie policeman down. Judgie glive he play flor it."

"Ah! I should have been there to curb old Tongs. I could always manage him, for he was afraid of me."

This was evidently said for my benefit, but Chin Chin at once broke its effect.

"Tong belly flaid of you. Flow you overboard; knockie stuffin lout. He, he, he!"

"Oh, no, Chin, you forget how I used to warm him when he got ugly."

"Warm sick kitty cat! Tong slam blang you heap times," persisted the Chinaman.

"Oh, you know better than that. You know how bad I used to be when I got a-going."

"Me yes. Go heap like debel when Tong go flor you, so be. Jlack great pirate!" and again the Chinaman laughed his little piping "tee-hee," while his brother

celestial looked as solemn as an owl, probably because he didn't understand a word that was said.

But, although Jack stood inside of the bar-room where I could not see him, I could easily understand that he was not altogether pleased with the way Chin Chin was bracing up to the character he had given me of himself and the terrible bad man he was.

And so I was not surprised to hear him change the subject and ask about the old captain with whom he had sailed.

But from what I could make out of his pigeon English, he had not been with him or in the employ of "Stump" for a year or more, and had lost track of all hands.

"More clider!" I heard Chin Chin call.

Jack hurried to obey orders, and when Chin Chin threw a half dollar down on the bar he also hurried that into his pocket without even suggesting the interesting formality of change.

"Well, old shipmate, we have seen some high old times together, eh?" said he, finally.

"Bettie you, heap!"

"Some awfully jolly times and some very tough ones, eh?"

"Ebly time, spect," replied Chin Chin, pulling away on his crazy cigar as though trying to make everybody else crazy.

"Fun on our watch below?"

"Heap."

"Red-hot on deck, eh?"

"Hot likie glavy on giddle! He, he, he!"

"Well, I should say so. Remember when we got shipwrecked on that unknown island where we found the white girl among the savage natives?"

"So be."

This was evidently brought out to confirm what he had told me about the affair, for he spoke a trifle louder than before.

"And how we slaughtered the rascals?"

"Heap killee."

Jack was strengthening his position all the time.

"And how I went for 'em, hey?"

"Go hidie, te, he, he!" replied the Chinaman.

"And," continued Jack, without appearing to notice what he said, "you remember the little dwarf native that Stump got?"

"So be, Thump, eh?"

"Yes, that was his name. And Stump's big monkey, 'Bob.'"

"Belly funny."

"Lord, Lord, what fun we did have with those two critters!" and Jack roared loudly.

"An' heap funny wiv undershirtie!"

"What?"

"Bristle in undershirtie. You an' Tong think got sickie an' takie heap bad medecine ffrom captain," and again did Chin Chin laugh.

Jack didn't join him this time.

I remembered the story Stump had told me of Chin Chin's revenge on Jack Hawser and Tongs, and I could scarcely keep from joining the Chinaman's laugh myself.

"Oh, those were high old times. Mind the time when Tongs knocked you overboard in the harbor of Rio Janeiro,

just because he wanted to hit somebody and didn't dare to tackle me, when the ship's dog went over with you, with your pig-tail half-way down his throat?"

"Belly funny; belly funny when Tong pickee you lup an' chuckee loverboard," said Chin Chin, as though to get even.

"Oh, that was nothing. Old Tongs had the jim-jams, and I knew the only way to save his life was to let him do whatever came into his head. It was a terribly hot night at Rio, and I had just made up my mind to jump overboard and cool off. That's how it was."

But the piping "tee-hee" of Chin Chin told as plainly as his English could have done that he knew better.

Jack, who knew of course that I could but overhear the conversation, touched lightly on doubtful points after that, and after indulging in more cider, he treated them to a fresh and a better cigar, soon after which they drove away, Jack and Chin Chin exchanging sea slang as long as they could hear each other.

But one thing I understood was that Chin Chin was going to be a frequent visitor, now that he had found his old enemy, the fellow who used to bully and abuse him when he was sea-sick, simply because he didn't dare to do so when he was well.

"Well, well!" said Jack, musingly, as he came out where I sat smoking. "Who would have expected to have seen that fellow here?"

"He saw your card in the paper, eh?"

"Yes."

"Old shipmate of yours, I should say."

"Lord bless you, yes. That is, he was cook on two different vessels that I was on, and we used to have great fun with him. We picked him up at Hong Kong, and made a cook of him; that's how it happened."

"I heard him say something about your being a pirate, if I mistake not."

"Oh, well, he heard something about it from somebody down in Callio or somewhere, but he don't know anything about it."

"How long were you in that particular line of life on the ocean wave?"

"Only a year or so," said he, carelessly.

"Do you mind telling me about it?"

"Not if you agree not to give me away."

"Oh, certainly not. I have read many pirate stories, and it would be a novelty, indeed, to hear one right from the buccaneer's lips. But I'll never repeat it, be assured."

"Well, then, I don't mind," said he, cutting off a huge chew of plug tobacco, and stowing it into his port jaw.

"How did you happen to get into it?" I asked, after he had brought some cider at my suggestion.

"Well, it happened in this way: It was about ten years ago or such a matter that I was before the mast on the bark Clara, bound from Callio to New York, when one fine day we were overtaken by a Spanish pirate, captured after a hard fight, and killing the officers, robbed and scuttled the bark, and kept the rest of us prisoners.

"The pirate captain rather liked me, for you must know I made a big fight before I was overpowered, and he wanted me to become one of his crew. See that scar?" he sud-

denly asked, pulling his hair apart. "Got that from a saber wound during that fight."

"You don't tell me so?" said I.

"Fact, sir. Oh, I'm covered with scars from head to foot that I've got at different times."

"Received in that fight?"

"Lord bless you, no. I've been in all sorts of fights when ashore, and of course got many cuts and bruises. Heard that Chinaman talking about a sailor named Tongs, eh?"

"Yes, I believe I did."

"Well, he's an older man than I am and nearly as tough. We were always fighting when we sailed together. The worst of it is with Tongs, though, he never knows when he gets whipped, and if you do knock him out once, he's just as ready for a fight the next time he happens to feel ugly. Lord, Lord, how many hard battles we have fought!" said he, and then he still further relieved his mind by squirting nearly a pint of tobacco juice into the spittoon.

"Very likely. But you were speaking of——"

"Yes, so I was. Well, when the pirate captain found he couldn't bring me over to joining his crew, he began to abuse me in all sorts of ways. Tied me up by the thumbs and flogged me with a rope's end; lashed me naked to a cannon and gave me the 'cat,' but yet I wouldn't give in or weaken. I saw that the crew was with me, and I meditated revenge. I asked them if they would stand by me, and they said they would if I would be their captain, for they hated Juan Mendeas. I was smarting under my wounds and was ready to agree to anything for revenge."

"Naturally enough," said I.

"So I agreed to their terms, and one night they rose in revolt, and after murdering the captain, threw him overboard, and hailed me as their chief."

"Quite a romance."

"Well, rather."

"And you continued the business?"

"Well, for a few weeks, until I could run the craft into Rio Janeiro, where I gave up the command to the first mate and abandoned the business. I knew some of the government war vessels would cut us out sooner or later, and, by thunder, I got out of her just in time!" said he, striking the table with his fist.

"How was that?"

"Because a United States gunboat captured her not a week afterward."

"Well, that was good luck for you."

"Yes, especially as I knew where the pirates had hidden their booty."

"Indeed!"

"Lord bless you, sar, what I know would make the biggest kind of a novel; but, of course, I am not going to tell it all."

"Of course not; but it wouldn't be a bad idea to write out your adventures, and have them published after your death."

"Yes, but there never was but one man who could do it in ship shape," he sighed.

"Indeed! Who was that?" I asked, curiously.

"Captain Marryatt. He was an old sea dog, like my-

self, and he could put the right kind of sails and rigging on the story. Ah, he was a great man!" he added, and it was evident that he had always been a close reader of those famous sea yarns told by the doughty captain.

"Well, about this booty?"

"Don't ask me too much about that, sar, for I arn't well enough acquainted with you yet. But I went to the rendezvous, and found it—found millions—and of course I am not going to sailor any more after that; but I keep this place, just to keep out of idleness."

"Of course I understand. You certainly do not care to travel."

"Lord love you, no. I've been everywhere, and seen everything there is in the world. No, I'll stay here a few years, or until I get homesick to ramble again, and then I shall probably fit up a yacht in magnificent style, get all of my old shipmates together and make a voyage around the world, lasting eight or ten years, taking in and enjoying everything that money can buy. But don't breathe a word of this."

"Oh, certainly not," said I; but somehow I thought afterward that the world ought to know more about this very bad man, although, of course, I cannot pretend to give it the touches that Captain Marryatt would have bestowed upon it.

Jack Hawser should have been something better than an ordinary sailor. He would have made a first-class blood-and-thunder novelist, or perhaps a poet.

I had heard all about that pirate business years before from Stump, who undoubtedly told a plain, unvarnished tale, as before published in the WIDE AWAKE LIBRARY, but how infinitely inferior was that tale when compared with the one I heard right from the hero's lips!

I was puzzled—or might have been, had I not known Jack Hawser.

Stump's version was ludicrously comical, while Jack's was full of tragedy and romance.

But I was bound to make him believe that I regarded him as a great hero, for I knew in that way I could get at his utmost confidence.

"And so you are well fixed, eh?" said I.

"Don't say a word, but I could buy and sell half of the rich men in New York."

"Goodness gracious!"

"I'm reeling it to you straight, but of course it wouldn't do for everybody to know it, you understand?"

"What a romance it would make!"

"What a play for the stage!"

"Yes, indeed. Monte Cristo would be tame alongside of it."

"And, mind you, I have only given you the skeleton of the thing."

"Oh, I understand. Let me write it up, seeing that Captain Marryatt is dead."

"Is the old sea-dog dead?" he asked, turning to me, in astonishment.

"Yes, the great romancer of the sea is dead."

"You don't tell me so? Another one of the old tars gone! And no knowing how long before Jack Hawser will furl his sails and drop anchor in his last harbor!" said he, bowing his head, after letting the tobacco juice out of it.

"True, very true. And that makes me think that you should leave your memoirs behind for future generations to read and admire," said I, keeping up the guying.

"Well, I suppose so," said he, thoughtfully.

"And, as I said before, seeing that your favorite author is out of the business, suppose you allow me to write up your life and adventures, and publish it as your own log? There will be money in it."

"Oh, I don't care for money," said he, snapping his fingers.

"Well, of course not. But if you should announce that the profits on the sale of your book were to go to the Sailors' Snug Harbor, or some other charity for disabled sailors, it would make you very popular."

"Do you think so?"

"Certainly. It would make the book sell like hot cakes, and the name of Jack Hawser would be on everybody's tongue. In fact, it would help your business here, too."

"Oh, I don't care about this. I only got into it to keep out of mischief, and have a nice place to entertain my shipmates."

"Yes, but popularity is a great thing."

"I suppose so. Well, go ahead and write up the story of my adventures as you think best. Come and see me every day, and I will spin you yarns enough to make twenty books."

"All right, that is agreed, and we will have some cider at my expense to bind the compact between us."

He brought forth the cider and we filled our glasses. Then he extended his big hand.

"Give us your grapple!"

We grappled, and he nearly broke my fingers with the grip he gave me.

"Now, up anchor and get under headway."

"All right. That settles it," said I, glad to get my hand out of his and to find it whole.

"Make it a clipper?"

"Oh, yes."

"Run up all the colors?"

"Yes."

"Stars and stripes at the peak?"

"Always."

"Get in all of my sea talk?"

"Certainly."

"For my friends and old tars generally wouldn't believe it was really me if you didn't, don't you know?"

"Of course not; I'll work it up to the queen's taste, I'll warrant you."

"Have a picture of me in front?"

"Oh, to be sure. Everybody would want to see how the hero of so many adventures looked. A picture, most assuredly."

"All right. Hello! who comes here?" he asked, starting up as a road-wagon, containing two men, turned in toward his tavern.

He went to see that the hostler did his duty, and I indulged in a quiet laugh.

Was ever such another confounded liar and blowhard ever known?

But had he known who I was I think he would have hesitated before committing himself quite so far.

The new-comers drove under the shed, and, after leaving their horse, came straight for the tavern.

Jack Hawser was welcome itself.

The men, one of whom was tall and the other short, stopped when they saw him, and then broke into a loud laugh.

This attracted my attention, of course.

"It's him, cap—it's Jack Hawser, sure enough," said the shorter of the two.

"Yes, you are right, Frank," and then they advanced toward him.

"Hello, Jack!" said the smaller man, advancing with extended hand.

"Ah, is that you, Jack?" the other one asked.

"What! Do my top-lights deceive me?" exclaimed Jack, starting in astonishment.

"I guess not."

"Blast my binnacle light! I swear I believe it is little Stump!" said he.

"Right you are, Jack!"

"And my old Cap'n Ward?"

"Right again, Jack," said the older and taller man, extending his hand.

"Well, blow my sails to ribbons if this isn't a genuine surprise."

"Something of the kind for us, Jack. We saw your card in the paper, and not knowing any other Jack Hawser, concluded that you had left the briny and started a ranch, to settle down and be a bad man no more."

"Your course is right, cap'n. But how Stump has grown! Why, I never should have known him if I had met him in my mess-tub," said Jack, looking him over.

"Yes, Jack, I waited until I got all ready and then attended strictly to growing. But you have been doing some growing in the meanwhile, also. How long since you left the grand old briny you used to love so well?"

"Oh, about a year. Made my last voyage to Calcutta in the bark Daniel Webster, and then concluded to settle down for awhile and try my luck at tavern keeping. Come in and have some cider. Best in the land," he added, leading them out into the arbor where I was sitting.

Frank Slathers, or "Stump," recognized me at once, and shook hands with me cordially, I at the same time asking him not to give me away to Jack.

The cider was brought forth and drank deeply to old times.

"I am devilish glad to see you both. I had lost track of you of late, and hoped you would see my advertisement."

"Yes, and that shows the benefit of advertising, Jack."

"And who do you suppose was here yesterday?"

"The police, perhaps."

"No. Who but old Chin Chin."

"Is that so?"

"Yes; he has also left going to sea, and is running a laundry somewhere in town."

"I would like to see him," mused Stump, and then the captain laughed heartily as he remembered some of the comical pranks of the Chinaman.

Then Stump ordered more cider and a brace of chops, evidently concluding that there was an hour or two of good fun to be had where they were.

"I shall never forget Chin Chin's racket in getting even with Jack and old Tongs. I never think of it without laughing. We had many comical things aboard, but that was the funniest thing I ever knew in my life," said Captain Ward, while Jack was away giving the order to his cook.

"Yes, that was very, very funny. Do you remember how you used to wallop poor Chin Chin?" asked Stump, when Jack returned.

"Oh, yes; I used to lose my temper with him once in a while," replied Jack, modestly.

"Yes, when he was sea sick," replied Stump, and then both he and the captain joined in another laugh.

"Ah! Stump, I see you are just as full of mischief as ever, and will have your little joke as of old," said Jack, making an attempt to laugh, although it was painfully evident that he didn't like Stump's way of putting things before me, the man he had chosen to be his biographer.

Therefore he laughed and made allusion to Stump's having his little joke.

"What has become of Bob?" I asked, thinking it would relieve Jack to have me turn the conversation.

"Oh, I have got him yet. But he is getting old and exceedingly sober now, hardly ever attempting any mischief beyond making the cats fight whenever an opportunity presents itself. And yet he has so increased in knowledge and dignity that there is talk of running him for Alderman in Jersey City this fall," replied Stump, laughing in his old, jolly, catching way.

He had grown in years and in stature, he had become a prosperous shipping merchant, and the father of a family, but there were bright traces left of the old little mischief that we knew him long ago.

"And what of Thump, the wild native of the unknown island you used to have?"

"Oh, he's all right yet. Traveling with Barnum as 'The Dwarf of the Cannibal Islands,' captured by a crew of American sailors after having partaken of three missionaries on toast," replied Stump, laughing.

"And Jack tells me that the girl you found on the same island has since become Mrs. Slathers. I wish you joy," said I.

"Thanks. Come and spend a week at my house anytime, and see if I did not find a jewel there on that far-away island."

"I haven't a doubt of it. But Jack says it cost the lives of many a hundred of those savages who held her before you succeeded in getting her away from them."

"Did he?" and Stump and Captain Ward exchanged glances, while just then Jack felt called upon to look after those chops.

"Yes, he says he slaughtered nearly half a thousand of them with his own hand before they would give her up."

Then there was another laugh.

"Ho, Jack, come here!" called Stump, and he reluctantly returned. "What is this you have been saying about my wife?"

"Me? Nothing. I was only telling the gentleman what a fight we had to rescue her," replied Jack, looking a trifle sheepish.

"How many of those natives did you kill with your own hand in rescuing her?"

"Oh, I have forgotten. But you know we had a devil of a time with them."

"Yes, I think *we* did. But what were *you* doing all the while?"

"Why, helping, of course."

"Yes, I remember how you helped. But I won't give you away, Jack. That's all past. But do you remember that bamboo tree that caught you up in the air while asleep?"

"Oh, yes, we had lots of fun there," and again his smile did not seem a happy one.

"Well, I should say we did."

"Who commands the Robin Hood now?" he asked, again turning the subject.

"Captain Ward, and is half owner besides."

"Would you like to sail with me again?" asked the captain.

"No, not right away. I have got tired of sea life and shall try it here awhile."

"Oh, I suppose Jack made money enough at pirating to be able to lay on his oars the remainder of the voyage," said Stump, and again did the two of them put in a full grown laugh, which I could not help joining.

Jack Hawser also laughed, but didn't appear to be very much tickled.

"Oh, you don't know all you might," said he, casting a significant look at me.

"No, gentlemen, certain secrets are confided to me, and I propose to give them to the world in a startling narrative form before long," said I.

"Oh, that's the racket, is it? Well, Jack, if you have forgotten any of the facts, those especially connected with our sailing together or the time when you were a pirate chief, just let us know and we will supply the defect," said Stump.

"Oh, that's all right, Stumpy, old man; I'll remember you. Now, then, here are your chops, done to the queen's taste, for I have one of the best cooks to be found in New York. Pay him three thousand a year, and am bound to get up a reputation here for first-class cooking. Ask this gentleman," he added, indicating me.

"Oh, I'll ask the chops themselves. Do you know, Jack, I can always taste a three thousand dollar cook? I can tell him from a five or a one thousand a year duffer."

"Well, sail in and pass the word along," said Jack, bustling about and garnishing the table in very good style, I must admit.

"Well, Jack, open some more of your cider and sit down. I want to buzz you some more."

"Ay, ay, sir," and he was not long in obeying this portion of the order.

"What has become of Tongs?" asked the captain, after they had tasted of the chops and pronounced them very good.

"I haven't seen him in two years. Guess he is dead," replied Jack.

"Why, I should have thought that you and he would have kept in the same wake, you were always such great friends," said Stump.

"Well, Tongs became more and more abusive as he

grew older, and every drunk he had the more cranky he became. The last time we were off on a breeze together he was more than I could stand. He actually wanted to fight with me."

"What! Well, he *must* have been crazy drunk," replied Stump, laughing.

"Yes, he was, and I wasn't feeling very angelic myself, so I gave him what he wanted, a devilish good pounding."

"Is that so?" asked both Stump and the captain.

"Yes, and from that time we never spoke. We shipped on different lines and I haven't seen him since."

"Well, that was tough on Tongs; that is, if you were dead in earnest and really mad."

"You know I can stand a great deal from an old shipmate, but there was no getting along with Tongs."

"Yes, he was a bad one; almost as bad as you are, Jack."

"I know it."

"Perhaps he's gone pirating."

"No knowing. He's got the nerve to do almost anything. Got any of the old lads with you now, cap'n?"

"Yes, three of the old crew."

"Which ones?"

"Bill Brace, Tom Bowline and Jim Smith."

"Good boys, all of them, and A No. 1 seamen. I should like to see them. Tell them where I am, and ask them to come and see me for old time's sake."

"To be sure I will. It would be as good as a circus for them to see you here; the tough old sea-dog, born on the crest of a wave and cradled between two of them; the old salt shark who used to get sick if he remained on land too long. Yes, they will be curious to see you," said Captain Ward, laughing.

But Jack looked at me, as much as to say:

"There's an indorsement for you."

"I say, Jack, remember our first trip from New York to Boston?" asked Stump.

"In that old dug-out of a schooner?"

"Yes."

"Where we had the chicken fight with the crew of a Spanish brig, and you beat them all with a striped bald eagle for a Yankee chicken?"

"Yes."

"And where we had the fight with them afterwards?"

"Yes, where eight or ten of them pitched on you at once, as you used to say."

"Oh, yes, I remember that trip. It was your first," replied Jack.

"And yours, too, I guess. Forgot how sea-sick you got, eh?"

"Oh, my stomach was out of order, likely."

"Yes, we all thought so. But a big syringe full of salt water settled it, if I remember rightly," replied Stump, laughing.

"Oh, for that matter, salt water is one of the best things in the world to settle a bad stomach," said he, never turning a hair under Stump's raillery.

"Yes, no doubt, and no doubt Tongs thought you had a bad stomach when he threw you overboard in Rio."

"Oh, that was all in fun between us."

"Fun! Well, come to think of it, it was funny—very, very funny. But you got square with him for old and new when you and he had that last scrimmage."

"Yes, that wiped out everything."

"Well, give us some more cider and a trio of your best cigars, and I'll wipe out the score," said Stump, and Jack hurried away. "Now, Mr. Pad, if you are going to be the further biographer of Jack Hawser, I hope you will do him justice," he added, turning to me.

"I shall try to."

"And if you lack any material, I will furnish you all you want."

"Well, as for that matter, Jack can do that himself," suggested the captain.

"That's so, come to think of it; and it will be sure to be more sensational than if I furnished it. But I must read the book."

"So you shall."

"What will it be called?"

"*Jack Hawser's Tavern*, although he thinks it is to be a big romance, or the narration of the life and personal adventures of Jack Hawser."

"Good. It will be a great yarn, I have no doubt, and everybody who has ever seen or known Jack will be sure to read it. Ah, here he comes with his little William. Well, how much is it, old shipmate?"

"Only eleven seventy-five," he replied.

"Oh, that's modest. Here, keep the odd change for luck," said Stump, giving him twelve dollars.

"Thanks, old shipmate," and he collared it without sweating a hair, although he had overcharged him frightfully.

"Now pipe up the horse."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"And mine, too, please," said I.

"Are you going?" he asked, as though surprised.

"Yes—but I will see you again before long."

"About that matter we were speaking about?"

"Yes—I'll not forget you."

The horses were brought up to the door, and Mike, the hostler, became the richer by half a dollar as he handed us the reins.

"Good-bye, Jack," said Stump.

"Good-bye, old shipmates. Come and see me again for old times' sake."

"Oh, yes. Good-bye," and away we drove, leaving Jack and his hostler looking after us with smiling faces.

And when well away from the place, how we did laugh among ourselves, and plan out fun for future occasions.

"Do you see those gentlemen?" Jack asked of his hostler, after we had departed.

"Indade I did, an' it's foine gentlemen they are, be me troth," replied Mike, fingering his tips.

"Well, I should say so! Those two men are old shipmates of mine."

"Are *they* sailor men?" asked Mike, in open-eyed astonishment.

"The big one is one of my old captains. The little one is a boy I picked up and made a sailor of. Now he owns a dozen ships."

"For yer makin' a sailor av him?"

"Yes, that's what made a man of him."

"Faix, I wish yee'd make a sailor av me."

"Oh, you arn't tough enough."

"Tough, is it?"

"Yes—you must be tough in all sorts of ways to be a good sailor. Why, we three have been wrecked at least a dozen times, and been in any number of fights."

"Foights! Faix, I'd rather be in a dozen foights than wan wreck," said Mike.

"Oh, of course. That's the way with all landlubbers. But being wrecked is nothing after you get used to it."

"Begorra, but I think the fishes would be afther gittin' me bones gnawed before I got used ter it."

"Bah! I used to get lonesome if I didn't get shipwrecked at least once a year."

"Howly mother!"

"Fact."

"Murther and nouns, fut a man!" mused Mike, as he walked away.

And Jack Hawser had another admirer.

That evening a couple of men, strangers in quest of refreshment, called at the roadside tavern, just because of the sign.

They ordered a large steak between them, and Jack proceeded to astonish them with his flow of sea slang.

"Kitchen ahoy!" he called.

"Ay, ay, sir," came the answer, for Jack had trained his cook.

"A nice sirloin steak, done to the captain's taste, with all the outer rigging."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"With two pannikins of strong tea."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Stir up the galley fires and serve in the cabin."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Why, he is a regular old tar, and no mistake," said one of the strangers to the other.

"Well, I should say so."

"Wish we could get him to spin us a yarn while we are waiting and eating," said the first.

Jack flew around and set a table for his guests in good form.

Indeed, it was known that he had been a waiter in an eating-house before he got sea-struck and took to the water; therefore, he was perfectly at home in the business.

"Been a sailor, I should say?" suggested one of the gentlemen.

"Well, rather. I was born on the briny, and followed it all my life till lately," said Jack, proud at the thing's suggesting itself.

"Been in all parts of the earth?"

"Been everywhere; seen everything."

"Seen plenty of whales, I suppose?"

"Helped take hundreds of them."

"Seen big sharks?"

"Been inside of one."

"What!" they both exclaimed.

"Swallowed."

"The devill!"

"Cut my way out with my sheath knife."

"Well, I'll be hanged!"

"Seen big turtles, I suppose?" asked the other.

"Big! Well, no bigger'n this house," said Jack, as sober as a setting hen.

"Big as a house! Oh, what do you take us for?" asked one of the strangers.

"Fact! Never told a lie in my life, sir. Things grow big in the tropics."

"Well, I should say so!"

"But, speaking of big turtles, reminds me of what happened us down in the Pacific, near the equator. We had been becalmed for several weeks," he began, after bringing his customers' order and seeing them going into it all right; "yes, and during this time we run short of water."

"That must be a terrible thing."

"Well, you bet it is. Not a drop of rain to catch, and the water-casks all shrinking with the heat and falling to pieces."

"Good gracious!"

Jack had found a good pair of listners.

"Well, as we were slowly drifting along one day, the captain made out a small island on the port-beam, and he at once ordered me to take a boat's crew and a couple of water-casks, and explore the island for water. In half an hour we were ashore and hunting for water, but not a sign of any could we find. The island appeared to be a barren rock, probably the top of a mountain just reaching above the surface.

"Well, you may well believe that we were disappointed, for according to the chart there was no other land nearer than a thousand miles.

"But, after making a thorough search, we went back and reported to the old man.

"'Jack,' said he, 'there must be water there on that island, but maybe you will have to drill for it, so take a long drill and two sledge-hammers and drill down three or four feet in different places, and see if you don't strike water.'

"'Ay, ay, sir,' said I, and in another half hour were back on the island.

"Selecting the most likely spot I could find, a seam in the rocks, I held the drill while two stout fellows began to strike it. Little by little it began to work its way down into the rock, and hope nerved us all to do our very best, of course. Well, when the drill had been pounded down about half its length, we felt a sudden motion as if an earthquake were at work upon the little island, and naturally enough we stopped and waited developments."

"Yes, naturally enough."

"Well, we soon began to feel the island sink, and made for our boat in hot haste."

"I should say so."

One of the men seemed all attention, and the other all appetite. One was swallowing the yarn Jack was reeling off, and the other all of the grub.

"We just managed to get into our boat when the island sunk beneath the sea. We pulled hastily for the ship, not knowing what might happen next. The captain and crew stood gazing in wonder, not knowing any more than we did whether the marvel had been caused by volcanic action, or whether we had scuttled the island we had intended to tap."

"Gracious sakes alive!" exclaimed the man so greatly interested, and the other one volunteered a grunt of surprise, but stuck to the grub.

"Well, we got on board ship again, feeling very blue and more thirsty than ever, all the while speculating upon the strange occurrence. Presently, however, the captain saw the island rise again some dozen leagues ahead.

"Rise again?"

"Yes, and looking just the same as ever."

"Thunder!"

"Yes. Well, we drifted along and finally came near to it again when blast my tarry toplights if it didn't go down again. We began to think we were all going mad with thirst and anxiety, when it rose slowly to the surface again, still further on."

"Who ever heard of such a thing?"

"Probably never happened before in the world."

"I should say not."

"Well, after watching it for some time, what do you suppose we found out?"

"I haven't the remotest idea."

"Well, sir, shiver my creaking timbers if what we had mistaken for an island didn't prove to be the back of a huge turtle!"

The interested man glared at Jack an instant, and then fell back in his chair, limp as a rag, while the one who had been doing all the eating suddenly stopped, and his lower jaw dropped down on his shirt while he gazed at Jack with a look of wondering astonishment.

"Fact, gentlemen, positive fact, and I can prove it by a dozen of my shipmates."

The man who had wilted slowly lifted his eyes, and his companion whose jaw had dropped, as though paralyzed, slowly gathered it up, but neither spoke, scarcely moved.

"It is rather a tough yarn, I'll admit, but it's gospel truth. Never told a lie in my life," said Jack, a trifle uneasy. "Never but one man told me I lied about that turtle, and he never left the hospital for six months," he added, as a warning to his customers.

"And you—you saw it?" ventured the wilted man, after a moment's hesitation.

"Of course I did. So did others."

"You helped drill a hole through the shell?"

"Yes, and it must have been three feet thick."

"Before you came to the meat?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Of course. Turtles always carry their meat under their shells," said the other, who had cautiously resumed his eating.

"And you all thought it was an island?" the wilted man again ventured.

"Yes, we all thought so."

"Well, say, Bill, ar'n't you going to eat anything?" inquired his friend.

Bill looked at the remains of the steak, and then shook his head sadly.

"No, I—I've lost my appetite," and, he might have added, his supper besides.

"Gents, you don't seem inclined to stow away that yarn?" said Jack.

"Oh, yes, we believe it, because you were an eye-wit-

ness to the affair, and because you never told a lie. But if anybody had told me that story who made a practice of handling the truth carelessly, I should not have believed it," said Bill, getting up from the table.

"How much for this entertainment?" asked the other, timidly.

"Only two dollars."

"Cheap as beach sand."

"What! all that for two dollars?" asked Bill.

"Oh, I calculate to use people right, so as to build up a trade here," said Jack.

"Oh, you'll do it, and I'll bet you will," replied Bill, and they slowly sauntered out into the open air.

Presently the man who had done the eating returned and looked in at the door.

"Say, you have broken my friend's heart."

"How?" asked Jack, in surprise.

"Why, he is the president of the Annanias Club, and is regarded as the biggest liar in New York. You have broken his heart with that turtle story, and he is going to resign."

"But it's a fact, and I can lick the man that——"

"Good-night," and the man was gone.

"Wonder what those fellows meant? If I thought they doubted my word, hang me if I wouldn't go out and wipe the road up with their lubberly carcasses," growled Jack, for the benefit of his reputation with Mike, who stood within hearing.

"Roight ye wud be, sor, if they tuck ony axception ter yer worrud," replied Mike.

"Right! why, damme, I have killed men for less than that," growled Jack.

"But maybe they worn't a-laughin' that they disbelieved ye, sor."

"Well, it's luck for them if they were not," and Jack went in to clear off the tables, while Mike counted over his day's spoils in the shape of "tips," and then went down to the gate to see if any other likely customers were coming to be fleeced.

But it was getting late, and nobody seemed inclined to take chances at Jack's hospitality, so, after waiting an hour or so, the lights were put out and another day was over.

It hadn't been a bad day for Jack, however, for although he had caught but a few customers, he had charged them enough to make up for a crowd at ordinary prices, and he was happy.

The next day brought other customers, though, for the unique sign which stood out so prominently on Jack Hawser's tavern was pretty sure to catch somebody, especially those who were in any way connected with seafaring life, or those who wanted to be.

A pair of these customers Jack caught that very day, in the shape of two young men who were quite as sea-struck as he had originally been himself, and he was delighted.

They were both about eighteen years of age, and had read so many sea stories that they thought they knew all about a life on the ocean wave, and of course Jack's sign caught them the first time.

And they were in just the right condition for him to work upon. They had studied a few sailors whom they found around the docks, but they had never yet come in contact

with a genuine son of Neptune—a real old salt sea dog like Jack Hawser.

And Jack was not slow in measuring them up and finding out just what the trouble was with them, for he had ached with the same fever, although they were better educated than he had been and were not inclined to be "bad" like him.

No, they were nice boys, belonging to good families, but they fancied themselves in love with a life on the ocean wave, and were both determined to become sailors.

They had a plenty of pocket money, and that, of course, pleased Jack, and when they beheld the old sad sea dog they seemed to think they had met Neptune himself, and so swallowed every word he said, as though they had been oracles from the sea god's temple.

They spent their money for refreshments, and Jack gave them more yarn than anything to eat or drink, which, after all, was just what they wanted.

They were not long in becoming quite well acquainted with the salty old tough, for Jack would not allow them to be. He was too anxious to astonish them with big stories of his adventures.

They plied him with all sorts of questions regarding a seafaring life, and he gave them quick answers, some of which made their hair curl.

By reading they learned the names and locations of nearly all the sails, ropes, and parts of a ship, but it did them good to hear Jack rattle them off while spinning a yarn.

And they came often to drink at the fountain of his great experience, and to sniff the salt sea breezes that mingled with his conversation.

"But," said he to them one day, "there is no use of your going to sea unless you have made up your mind to be *bad*."

"What? Bad—how?" they both asked.

"Why, you have got to be rough and be able to fight everybody and everything, from a devil-fish to the cabin boy."

"Why so?"

"Because you'll meet a rough crowd in every port, and almost always among your shipmates there is sure to be one or more ugly customers who will whale you if you don't whale them. I have always found it so. For instance, there was a big fellow on the ship I sailed in a number of voyages. His name was Tongs, and he used to whip and maltreat everybody before the mast. He tried it on me, but I kicked. And yet I had to thrash that fellow and throw him overboard three or four times before he would behave."

"He must have been a bad one," said the youths, with open eyes and mouth.

"Bad! Why, he has been known to lick ten policemen who tried to arrest him for creating riots ashore and cleaning out taverns."

"And you thrashed him?"

"Well, I should say I did. And so you have got to be ready for just such chaps."

"But can't you get along without fighting?" asked one of the youths, seriously.

"Well, yes, that is if you are willing to take everybody's

slack. But if you are going to prove yourself a thoroughbred American seaman, you have got to fight. At all events, I have always had to until they found out that I was a dubster at the business, and then they left me alone."

"What parts of the world have you visited?"

"Every part, with the exception of the Poles."

"Gracious!" they both exclaimed.

"Oh, I have been a good one in my day, I can tell you. I wanted to see the world, and as soon as I had finished one voyage I would ship in another vessel going somewhere else."

"Ever been shipwrecked?"

"About a dozen times."

"The deuce you say!"

"Yes, been shipwrecked in all parts of the known world, and had some close calls for voyages to the next."

"Well, I should say so. What was your last?"

"Well, let me see," he mused, as though the great number of such experiences had got somewhat mixed in his mind. "Oh, yes, I remember now. Yes. It was in the South Pacific. We were bound from San Francisco to New York around the Horn. When about two hundred miles west of Callio we ran into a hurricane that drove us under a close-reefed square sail and reefed jib at the rate of twenty knots an hour for nearly a week. In fact, we were taken right along by the storm in spite of all we could do, and before we were able to get out of it we were dashed upon an unknown island inhabited by cannibals."

"You don't say so!"

"But I do, though. They came upon us in wild and ferocious droves. We defended ourselves with our guns and revolvers until we had killed more than half of the tribe, although all but four of us had been slain. The captain and all the officers had fallen, and I was chosen leader. We built a sort of a fort of the wreck, and behind it resisted the brawny devils until only two of them remained."

"Good gracious!"

"How many had been killed?"

"About a thousand. It was only a small island."

"Well, after we had killed them we set to work building a raft of the wreck, for we had no notion of remaining there, as in all probability a ship would never come near the place. So when we had our raft finished and had hoisted a mainsail and jib, we gathered up all the provisions we could find and set sail eastward, hoping to reach the track of vessels."

"Just think of it," said one of them to the other.

"Well, we scud along at the rate of about six knots an hour for a week, the wind remaining favorable all the while. But at the end of that time we struck another hurricane, and by it was hurried along as we had been before, but for a longer time, and after being knocked about for nearly a month, suffering terribly all the while, we were finally driven ashore. And where do you think we found ourselves?"

"Who could even guess?"

"Well, my hearties, we had been driven back again to San Francisco, where two months after sailing we brought the first news of our wreck. I got mad and took the overland route for New York, and haven't been to sea since."

"That settled you, eh?"

"Yes, that was enough."

"Well, I should say so."

"Most people would."

"That was a terrible experience."

"Yes, as landlubbers look at it," said Jack, entirely unmoved.

"And so you gave up the sea?"

"Yes, I had been everywhere, seen everything on top of the earth, and why should I wish to continue it, especially after I had found a pirates' cave."

"What?" they both exclaimed.

"A pirates' cave."

"You don't say so!"

"Oh, I'm talking now."

"A pirates' cave!"

"An old timer such as we read of?"

"Well, I don't know about that."

"Tons of silver."

"Big wedges and bars of gold."

"Solid silver ware."

"And gold services."

"Dozens of fortunes all in one."

"Well, you are getting pretty nearly on to it. Yes, I will not deny it. There were bushels of gold there," said Jack, with a sigh.

"And silver?"

"Yes."

"And gold plate?"

"Yes, the proceeds of a hundred robberies."

"And you?"

"Well?" asked he severely.

"I beg pardon, but you——"

"Don't talk any more. I know certain things, simply remember that."

Then Jack was at his best.

The wise and knowing look he put on, the air of mystery was quite enough to crush the two tyros utterly.

They began to see what a terrible old salt they had struck.

They knew, of course, before this that he was about as bad as they made sailors, but to think that he had penetrated a pirates' cave, that he knew even now where untold millions were secreted, was enough to complete the enchantment, and in their minds Jack Hawser was a greater man in real life than any character that they had ever read of in fiction.

Been in a pirates' cave!

Knew all about things that other people were only supposed to dream about!

And, perhaps, a pirate himself!

How did they know?

They looked at each other with wonder sticking out all over them.

And it was some minutes before either of them could collect wind and nerve enough to continue the conversation.

And even then they did not dare to trench on the forbidden ground—that thing about the pirates' cave, for how did they know how far to go, or how much they could say without becoming personal?

Finally, Jack, in his bigness of heart, came to their relief.

"Ever heard about the Grassy Sea?"

"That almost unknown tract in the South Pacific?" asked one.

"Yes."

"I have read something about it, but I never took much stock in its existence."

"What!" roared Jack, angrily.

"Well, that is to say, I—I——"

"Oh, you never believed that such a thing existed, eh?" he asked, sneeringly.

"Well, no, to tell the truth."

"Bah! But that only goes to show that you are like the majority of landlubbers. I've seen it," said he, fiercely.

"Seen it?"

Jack bowed.

"A real grassy sea?"

He bowed again.

"But what is meant by the term?"

"Why, a sea that actually seems to be made of grass. There's one in the South Pacific as large as a Western prairie, and it looks like one at a distance."

"You don't say so!"

"Yes. Many a poor tar has been fooled by mistaking it for land."

"Tell us about it, please."

"Yes, after you have brought us some more cider," remarked the other.

That was the way Jack liked to hear his customers talk. He liked to hear himself talk well enough, but, after all, business was business, and he couldn't afford to talk when he was dry.

"Well, in the first place, of course, you must know there are no waves in this grassy sea. It seems to be a sea of seaweed, and, of course, waves die out the moment they reach it; not as they do when they fall on reefs and such things, but they gradually lose themselves and die out without a single sound."

"Wonderful!"

"Very, very wonderful!"

"What happens in this sea?"

"Strange and terrible things sometimes," replied Jack, bracing himself for another yarn.

"No doubt—no doubt."

"Tell us of something," said the other, for by this time they were ready for anything in the shape of a story.

"Well, the worst I ever knew about it——"

"Beg pardon. Let us have some more cider before you commence this narration."

"Certainly, by all means."

Jack caught the proposition on the fly, for he had an eye to business as well as a tongue for entertainment.

So the cider was brought before further progress was made in the Grassy Sea.

"Your very good health, Master Hawser," said one.

"Yes, yes!" and they cided.

"Well, perhaps the story will be too long for you?" mused Jack.

"No, no; not if it lasts all night."

"And all of to-morrow," added the other.

"Well, as I said before, this grassy sea is a vast expanse of floating sea-weed, carried to its present place by both winds and tides, until it is now almost boundless in extent, and probably five fathoms deep on the average."

"Good gracious!"

"Five fathoms deep?"

"Yes. Well, winds and tides often take ships out of their course, and, before they are aware of it, they are helpless, and may drift or remain still until their provisions are gone, and death comes to the rescue."

"Dreadful!"

"Singularly dreadful!"

"Just think of it!"

"So I do!"

And they were dead in earnest, too.

"Of course we old salts understand all this and make little of it," said Jack.

"Little?"

"Make little of it!"

"Oh, yes. We get used to all sorts of strange and wonderful things that you landlubbers never hear about."

"No doubt."

"Not the slightest doubt of it."

"Oh, we must go to sea."

"Well, don't be too fast. Remember what I have told you," said Jack.

"Yes, but I think I could fight some."

"So do I," replied the other.

"But that isn't all. You must be able seamen before you can expect to be taken where you will see wonders and marvels."

"Yes, to be sure."

"Of course. But you were about to tell us something of the Grassy Sea."

"Yes. But it is rather a painful yarn for landlubbers to hear."

"Never mind," said one.

"No, we are gradually getting hardened," suggested the other.

"Well, this is how it came about: I was first mate on the Columbus, one of the finest ships that ever spread canvas. We were engaged in the California trade, and as this was in the early days, before there was any railroad across the Isthmus, we had of course to double the Horn."

"Just think of it!"

"Wonderful?"

"Well, on one trip, coming from California, we got becalmed off the coast of Chili, and drifted south by west for two weeks or more, when one morning we found ourselves in the meshes of that terrible Grassy Sea."

"Only to think!"

"Wonderful!"

"How far we were into it we did not know, but we afterward learned that we were in about twenty miles."

"Twenty miles!"

"Who would believe it?"

"But when morning broke we found ourselves alongside of an ancient-looking Spanish brigantine. A glance showed us that she had been there for years—how many we could only guess. But the sails hung in shreds from the masts

and spars, and the seaweed had grown almost all over the hull."

"Good heaven!"

"Only to think of it!"

"Well, naturally, we wanted to get on board and see what it was all like."

"Of course."

"Certainly."

"We were not more than ten fathoms away, but the seaweed was so dense that when we launched a boat it stood on its keel, and not until five or six of us got into it did we crowd it down beyond three streaks. After pushing and working for an hour or more, we managed to reach the old hulk, for that is all it amounted to. I was the first one to climb aboard, and the sight that met my gaze I shall never forget."

"Goodness!"

"What was it?"

"The decks were slimy and covered with a green sort of moss. The hatches were down, and after gazing around for a moment in speechless horror, I made my way aft. There, with bony hands clutching the rotten spokes of the wheel, was the skeleton of a man who had evidently died at his post years before."

"Merciful Heaven!"

"Did you ever?"

"No, not in the wildest romance."

"Nor I."

"Yes, my hearties, there stood the skeleton of the man who was doing his trick at the wheel, as we sailors say, a weather-bleached skeleton. Well, of course we were all taken aback at this, and if it hadn't been for me and another old sea dog, by the name of Tongs, the whole boat's crew would have made haste back to our ship."

"No doubt."

"I should say so."

"But I was in for it, and bound to see all there was and get at the truth of the matter, if possible, all the while understanding, as did my shipmates, that our fate might be the same as this wheelman's."

"Of course."

"Dreadful."

"Well, Tongs and I made our way, with much trouble, down the open companionway leading to the cabin. It was so slippery from the slime of time that we could scarcely keep our feet under us, but we finally managed to reach the cabin."

"And there?"

"Yes, there?"

"There we found the skeletons of the captain, first and second mate, seated around the cabin table, on which there were the weather-rotted remains of a chart and sextant and compass, just as they had been left at the death of these worthies. Four of these skeletons sat bolt upright around that circular cabin table."

"Gracious goodness!"

And the other fellow sighed.

"Well, after recovering somewhat we began to look around for evidences of the ship's nationality, and finally, on forcing open an iron-bound locker, whose hinges had

all but been eaten away by rust, we found the ship's papers quite well preserved."

"And she was?"

"The ship Pizzarro, and her papers showed that she hailed from a port in Spain fifty odd years before."

"Fifty years before!"

"Yes, and there she had been in that tideless, motionless grassy sea all that time, and probably would have gone to the bottom if the grass would have allowed her to do so. We took her papers and about one hundred thousand gold doubloons which we found in the locker, and after a long struggle worked our way back to our own vessel, where we reported the facts."

"Good gracious!" they both exclaimed.

"Yes, my lads, I know that much about the Grassy sea," said Jack, complacently.

"What a tragedy!"

"Yes, indeed. But how did you manage to escape?"

"Well, perhaps you never heard of such a thing before," mused Jack.

"Dare say."

"And perhaps you won't believe it."

"Oh, my dear sir," protested the two of them.

"Well, it is a long yarn, our getting out of that terrible scrape, but we did it."

"Yes, for here you are."

"Certainly, of course."

"Well, I'll make it as short as possible, for it is getting late."

"Yes, but suppose we have some more of your cider before you begin?"

"Very well. My whistle is getting rather dry," said Jack, catching the point at once.

"Of course."

"To be sure."

And the cider was soon produced.

"Now, then, my lads, I'll tell you how we worked it. Of course we saw that there was no possible escape from the sea of grass, and if we got away at all it must be by some other means than our ship or boats. Finally, after we had studied over the matter for a long time, a happy thought hit me amidships."

"Ha, ha, ha! Very good!"

"Devlish good! Amidships!"

"Yes, I was always regarded as a genius at getting out of bad scrapes, so I happened to think of a balloon."

"Balloon?"

"Yes. I gave 'em my ideas, and they all jumped at the plan. We had all the canvas we wanted, and so all hands were piped with spun yarn and sail needles."

"Just think of it."

"Yes, I arranged it to take up our long boat for a car or basket, loaded with all the provisions we could stow away in her, and after working like beavers for a week, we at length had the body of the balloon ready to blow up."

"Blow up?"

"Inflate, you mean."

"Certainly, of course. Don't you suppose I know what I mean?" he asked, half indignantly.

"To be sure."

"Most undoubtedly."

"It was a hot air balloon."

"Hot air?"

"Certainly. We had a plenty of rosin and tar aboard, and after we had made the huge balloon fast to the long boat, we started the fire under the mouth of it, and presently she began to swell. Yes, it swelled and swelled until it was as big as a ship, and then, when all was ready, we cut lose and shot up into the air like an arrow."

"Merciful goodness!"

"Only to think of it!"

"And how ingenious!"

"I should say so."

"And you left everything behind?"

"Of course, all that we could not take with us in the long boat. Up—up we went for half a mile or so, which enabled us to get a good view of the grassy sea that was dotted all over with rotting hulks, and finally we got a stiff breeze from the west, and began to sail along through the air at the rate of a mile a minute."

"Good gracious!"

"Only think of it!"

"A mile a minute!"

"Yes, more than that," replied Jack, seeing that he had got out of the grassy sea. "We drifted along in this way for a week, and finally, when we sighted land, we allowed the fire to go gradually down, and we did the same thing, landing on the coast of Chili among a crowd of astonished natives, who thought we had surely come from heaven."

"Well, no wonder!"

"What an adventure!"

"Yes, that was a pretty lively one, my lads, one of the many I have had in my life-time at sea. Well, to make a long story short, we finally managed to find a port and a vessel that brought us to Philadelphia. But, in addition to this, there is another story," said he, reflectively.

"Another?"

"Yes, a regular romance."

"Do tell us what else could have happened?"

"Oh, it's a long story, and I will tell it to you some other time. But, I say, do I look like a married man?" he asked.

"Well, no, not exactly."

"Do I look like the son-in-law of a king?" he asked, bracing up.

"No. Do tell us?"

"Yes, please do?"

"No, not to-night. It's a long story about what befell us among those natives, the king of whom insisted upon my marrying his only daughter, a beautiful creature, who had fallen dead in love with me. But I'll tell you about it another time," said he, rising to intimate that the yarn was done.

"Oh, we must hear that, surely."

"Certainly; it is the sequel to the wonderful story we have already heard."

"Yes, so it is. Drop in again some time, and you shall hear it."

"Of course we will," and after paying their bill, which was a round one, of course, they bade him good-night and left the tavern.

Jack had been delighted at first to find two such attentive and gullible listeners to his yarns. But after a while

they became altogether too interested, and would have stayed by him all night if he had continued.

Mike, the hostler, had stood outside so as to overhear the yarn, and he was almost as nearly paralyzed as the two sea-struck youths had been, only he didn't believe quite so fully.

"I hope yees will pardon me, sor," said he, as they were closing up the tavern for the night, business being over.

"What?" yelled Jack, glaring at him.

"I beg pardon, sor, but——"

"Thunder and marlinspikes! who am I?" he roared, frowning at the trembling Mick.

"Yer—yer ther boss, sor."

"Avast there! how often have I got to tell you to address me as captain, not as mister or sir? Blast my tarry toplights, but I shall be obliged to use the rope's-end on you if you don't steer clear."

"I—I begs pardon, cap'n."

"That'll do. Now, what is it?"

Mike scratched his head and tried to collect his thoughts, but Jack's vehement correction of his manner of addressing him had rattled the poor fellow completely.

"What der yer soy?" demanded Jack.

"Well, sor—cap'n, I mean—I was goin' to say that I couldn't help overhearin' ther story yees wur tellin' ther gintlemen."

"Well?"

"It bates the wurruld."

"It does, hey?"

"Yis. Divil a bigger story I iver hearn."

"And don't you forget that it's true," replied Jack, putting out the last light and making his way up-stairs, while Mike struck out for his bunk in the barn.

"Be ther bunions av Moses! be ther shillalah av St. Patrick! that boss av moine is eather ther darndest loir in ther wurruld or the greatest man," he mused, and he pulled the horse-blanket over him as he lay down and tried to think which he was.

Well, the following day I stopped at Jack's hostlery as before, and after ordering a good steak, with the trimmings, I sat down at one of the outer tables in the shade and pretended to be reading a paper while waiting for my grub, although in reality I was watching the sailor-landlord.

He had saluted me pleasantly on my arrival, but he evidently wanted time to collect his thoughts and brace himself for something new that should be included in the adventures I was to write.

Of course he must have known that he had not succeeded in maintaining himself as a very tough old sea dog with Stump and the captain when they were there, and the chaff and conversation was in my presence, and I naturally expected that he would try to patch up that leak first.

Nor was I mistaken, or kept long in suspense over the matter, for no sooner had he served my dinner than he took a near by seat, and began.

"Great boy, that Stump?" said he.

"Yes, for a little one."

"The old man is a good one, too."

"You mean the captain?"

"Yes. We sailors always call the cap'n the old man."

"Oh, yes, so I have read."

"Yes, you can always tell an old salt by his calling his cap'n the old man. Oh, that Stump is a good one. But he will have his joke, though. Why, he used to keep all hands on the lookout for his pranks. And he is a great rigger, too."

"Rigger of ships?" I asked, innocently.

"Lord bless you, no, sar. But he is all the while rigging somebody, or playing jokes on them. You heard what he said?"

"Oh, yes! He seemed to have something in for you all the time."

"Yes, he always has. So he has for everybody. Oh, he is never quiet. But, Lord bless you, sar, he don't mean anything by it. All he wants is fun."

"Yes, I know he is fond of it."

"Oh, chuck full of it. Always was. Why, even while I was making a sailor of him he would play his pranks, and, of course, he was too small for me to take the rope's end to."

"Of course. But you and Tongs used to have it out quite often, I believe."

"Oh, yes! But that's nothing. Best of shipmates fight occasionally. They have to do it to work off their bile and keep from flogging the officers."

"Yes, I suppose so. Heard from Tongs?"

"No; he may be in China for all I know," said he, indifferently.

"Do you think he will call and see you when he gets in port again?"

"No, I guess not. That last flogging I gave him made him sick, and I don't think he'll try to find me again."

"Let me see. You started to tell me about an old Quaker that you took aboard the Robin Hood on one of her trips from Rio to New York," said I, carelessly.

"Did I? I have forgotten that I did," he said, reflectively.

In fact he had not, but as I had heard of the affair, I resolved to see what he had to say about it at this distant day, as also what he would say about the English traveler, Fitz Plantagenet, who also figured on that trip.

"Oh, that was nothing. In fact, I had forgotten all about it. Never should have thought about it again in the world if you had not called my attention to it. No, he was a nice enough old crab, but as he was rich he thought he could bully everybody on board. No, that was nothing for me. But when he got in my way once and gave me some of his slack, I just slugged him, that's all, and it made a man of him."

"Oh, it did, eh? Wonder it hadn't killed him," I observed, to lead him on.

"No; of course, I didn't hit him very hard. There was no occasion for it; I only wanted him to know that he could not bully an American sailor, that's all, and he soon found out that he couldn't. But there was a big English swell on board during that trip that managed to bully everybody until he run a-foul of me, and then he buffed up into the wind to repair gear."

"Tell me about it, please."

"Oh, it isn't much of a story. In fact, it is no story at

all. Really, now that I happen to think of it, I am at a loss to know what to call it. But this Fitz Plantagenet was a great boxer, a perfect giant, a man who had simply downed everybody with whom he came in contact, and was all the time looking for gore. Of course none of us knew this at the time. We simply weighed him up and concluded that it would be no boy's play to tackle him."

"No doubt."

"But he got mussy one day and evidently wanted exercise, and happening to light on me first, he proceeded to overrun his tackle and look for exercise. Of course I was taken aback by this sudden squall, and came near going over on my beam's end. But I righted quickly and cleared for action."

"Good!"

"By this time, of course, I had become mad, and when I am on that tack I will not deny that I am bad. Well, to make a long story short, I knocked him over on his beam's end and proceeded to swab up the deck with him. The crew urged me on, and I concluded to make him sick while I was about it, so that he would behave himself thereafter and let the crew alone."

"Good for you, Jack!"

"Oh, you can bet that Fitz Plantagenet hasn't forgotten me."

"Right you are, Jack Hawser, and I am glad to see that you haven't forgotten the drubbing I gave you on board the Robin Hood," said a voice; and, on looking up, we espied two men standing behind us, where we could not have seen them without turning around.

A glance convinced me that they were none other than Fitz Plantagenet and the old Quaker gentleman, both of whom had given Jack something to remember them by.

They had been attracted by the sign, or had read Jack's card in the papers, and had called to see the "bad man" in his new role, just in time to overhear the yarn about how Jack had whaled them both.

Jack Hawser's face and attitude was a study.

If he had seen them rise from the dead, he could not have been taken more aback.

He tried to speak, but that tongue which had so lately been wagging refused to move.

"So here you are, eh, keeping a tavern, and keeping up your reputation for lying?" said the Englishman, approaching nearer.

"Jack, thee is a great liar. Why don't thee mend thy ways?" asked the Quaker.

"Gentlemen, what's your pleasure?" asked Jack, appearing not to know them.

"Oh, we thought we'd call and see how you were getting along," said Plantagenet.

"And if thee had reformed thy lying speech," added the old Quaker.

"Which we find you have not. We should have spent some money here had we not heard you using our names to this gentleman in connection with a lie."

"I do not understand you, gentlemen," said Jack, as though he had something in his throat.

"But we understand you, and if this gentleman is your company long enough he will also understand that you are the champion liar and flunk of the world. The idea of your

telling him that you walloped me, when everybody knows that I made you yell like a stuck pig."

"Yea, and he said also that he had punished me, when in truth I made him beg for quarter," said the Quaker.

"I dare say you have told him about flogging old Tongs," added Plantagenet, and then with a laugh they turned and walked away, leaving Jack there, evidently very much relieved, but looking groggy.

Of course he did not know that I knew the two gentlemen, so when they had got out of hearing he turned to me.

I felt curious to know how he would extricate himself from the complication.

"Well, blast my tarry toplights, that douses my glim!" said he.

"Know who they are?" I asked.

"Know them! Don't know 'em from sharks," said he, with a forced laugh.

"Well, that's strange."

"Strange! Well, I should say so. Why, the men must be crazy or drunk."

"Very funny indeed, and, what is stranger still, they claim to be the very two men you had just been telling me about."

"Yes, what a nerve they had. But I suppose they had been listening to my yarn and talked that way just for fun."

"Barely possible."

"Oh, I could see that they were full or I should never have allowed them to talk that way to me, although, of course, I would stand almost anything rather than have a fight in my place. Liable to get your license taken away, you understand."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Very dangerous business."

"Oh, I guess you did right. But somehow they must have been posted," said I.

"What about?"

"Why, what was it one of them said about old Tongs?"

"I didn't hear anything. The fellow with the whiskers said something about *songs*. But, Lord bless you, sar, they didn't know what they were saying."

"Perhaps not. By the way, speaking of this old shipmate of yours, Tongs, I would like to see him very much."

"Oh, he may be in China for aught we know."

"What sort of a looking chap is he?"

"Great, big, grizzly fellow, who always wears his oilskins, rain or shine, hot or cold."

"Well, he must be a curiosity."

"Yes, he'd make you laugh. But I guess we shall never see old Tongsy, for if he was in port and knew my berth, I don't think he'd hail me, for ever since I gave him that last drubbing he has steered clear."

"I am sorry, for in this story I am going to write wherein you are the hero I want to make him figure as a character drawn right from life."

"Yes, but I can tell you all about him. By the way, I haven't told you yet of that adventure I had in China."

"No, let me have that by all means. Also let us have some more cider," said I, and he lost no time in filling the order.

What was he going to give me now?

I was in doubt at first about his being able to shake out any new reefs in the shape of sensational stories of his personal adventures, but that only showed that I did not know him.

One or two customers dropped in, and after waiting upon them, he returned to where I was and took a seat.

Once or twice he seemed to be on the point of opening up, but it was evident that something was lacking.

It proved to be ballast, or at all events tobacco, for after cutting off a large hunk with his sheath knife, he stowed it away in his larboard cheek, and began:

"Well, sir, this story I'm going to tell you of now happened me about fifteen years ago, when I was an able seaman on board the ship *Junietta*, bound from Boston to China."

"Long voyage," I suggested, seeing that he seemed to be having trouble stowing away his quid or getting it in place.

"Well, yes. It is called a long trip nowadays, although in those times, when sailing was sailing, and there were no confounded steamships smoking up every line of trade, it wasn't considered much of a voyage. But that is neither here nor there. We were bound for Canton to bring back the first crop of new tea, and to be first home in those days was a big thing."

"Yes, and it is even considered so nowadays," said I.

"Yes, so it is. But, as I was saying, we were in the Yellow Sea, which at that time was full of Chinese pirates, lying in wait to capture the gold and silver of foreign merchantmen who went to buy tea, silks, and other truck. And in those days every ship went armed for such customers."

"Yes, I have read of such things."

"Well, one night as we were sailing along, I being in command of the deck, and this very same Tongs at the wheel, four Chinese piratical junks suddenly bore down upon us. I piped all hands for action, and in a half of no time we were ready for them.

"Keep her steady, Tongs!" I shouted, for the old man—that is, the captain—being on the sick list, and it being my watch, the whole business came upon me."

"Of course."

"The foremost pirate bore down and tried to board us. The decks swarmed with the pig-tailed devils, but our Yankee ship kept straight on her course, and our Yankee crew was all ready for them. Well, they began to swarm up our sides like ants.

"Up and at 'em, boys!" I yelled, and they responded with a hurrah.

"Each man was armed with a revolver and cutlass, and as fast as the pirates showed themselves on our bulwarks they chopped off their arms or heads, and down they dropped into the sea. It sounded like bullets dropping into the water, and before the other one of the pirate junks could range up alongside so as to board us, we had killed every rascal on the first one, and lashed the junk alongside."

"Good boys!" I was bound to exclaim.

"When the other one came up we were all rested. I ordered up a pinnikin of rum for each man, and the result was that we served junk No. 2 in the same way, thus hav-

ing one on either side. This prevented the third one from coming alongside to board us, but they finally attacked us astern. Then we took it quiet like, and popped off the rascals as fast as they showed their heads above our stanchions, until finally all the pirates on the third one were killed, and this we made fast astern."

"Good for you."

"The crew was with me to a man, and would follow me anywhere. Well, presently the fourth and last one came up and made an attempt to board us and get possession of one of the captured junks. But we were there every time. They had no fire-arms, and it was only fun for us. 'Go it, Jack!' cried old Tongs, still at the wheel. 'Bet on me every time, old shipmate,' said I, and then the fourth fight began in good earnest.

"But of course they had no show with us. We were much higher than they were, and could kill them at our leisure. Well, we killed them all on board of the fourth and last pirate, and then taking her astern of the third one, we set sail up the Canton river, and took the four of them into port, where we presented them to the Chinese Emperor, who felt so good about it that he loaded us down with new tea without charging us a cent for it, and then cut off the heads of a thousand cheap Chinamen in the midst of fireworks for our amusement."

"Well, I'll be hanged! that beats anything I ever heard of in my life," said I.

"Well, what did I tell you? Didn't I know that my experiences would make a book worth reading?"

"I should say so."

"Oh, Jack Hawser don't belong to the milk-and-water heroes you hear of nowadays. I'm one of the genuine old American salts, I am," said he, with a swagger.

"Well, I believe you."

"That's the sort of a sailor I have been all my life. Put that in your log."

"Well, how did it result?"

"Oh, the emperor wouldn't let any of the other ships leave until we had got a week's start, and so, of course, we got back home ahead of them all."

"But what did the owners say?"

"Oh, they gave us all a thousand dollars apiece for a frolic, and we kept it up for a month, you may bet."

"Of course. Had a great spree?"

"Spree! Why we painted Boston so red that everything had to be overhauled and whitewashed after we got through."

"Not the slightest doubt of it. Now, how many of those Chinese pirates do you think your crew slaughtered?" I asked, just for the sake of figuring him down a little.

"Well, we afterward learned that there were three hundred of them to each junk."

"And four junks. That would be twelve hundred altogether, and I understood you to say that you killed them all."

"Every pig-tail of them."

"Did Tongs take a hand in?"

"Ah! that puts me in mind of a good thing about Tongs in that battle. He was at the wheel, and I was in charge of the deck. Well, when we were about to engage the

second crew, Tongs couldn't stand it any longer without blood.

"Put somebody else in my place, Jack," said he, "and let me gun them devils awhile." "No, Tongs, stand by your post," said I, "for you are the only man I can trust in such an emergency as this." "All right," said he, "only let me have a revolver, so that I can pop at 'em when I have the wheel lashed." "All right," said I, and I sent below for a pair of big seven-shooters for him, and he got a pig-tail for every cartridge, holding the wheel with one hand and firing with the other," he added, laughing.

"Tongs must be a trump."

"Oh, yes, he's one of us."

"I should say so. How many men had you in your crew?"

"Twenty, besides the old man."

"That is to say, twenty fighters?"

"Yes."

"That would be sixty pirates to a man."

"Just that, on an average. But, God bless you, sar, I think I killed at least a hundred with my own hand. But that is neither here nor there. You can write it down just as I pay it out to you, and it will be near enough to the fact."

"I suppose there would be no difficulty in getting at the historical facts of the case?"

"What for?" he asked, in astonishment.

"Why, for the benefit of any reader who might doubt the story. Of course, this book is bound to make a great sensation in the world, and some people might be mean and captious enough to doubt the truth of such an amazing story."

"Just refer them to Jack Hawser," said he, with a swagger that was as grand as it was convincing.

Well, that ended the interview, and I assured him that I would call on him again when I had reduced to writing what he had already given me, and so after some more cider, at my expense, I left him and went out for my horse.

Mike was as lively as a cricket, for he knew there was a quarter waiting to get into his itching palm as soon as I got into my wagon.

"Great man, that Captain Jack Hawser, sor," said he, handing me the reins.

"Wonderful," said I, giving him the coin.

"Long loife er yeess, sor. But sure he's ther greatest man I ever hearn av."

I could not help smiling as I drove away, feeling certain that Jack had been telling him some of his wonderful yarns. But so long as he believed them and was happy, why should he not regard the tough old salt as a great and marvelous man?

Well, it was fully a week before I called on him again, and on this occasion I found quite a sensation in store for me, although nothing of a sanguinary nature.

There were about a dozen sailors there, some of whom had sailed with Jack Hawser, and they were having a regular sailor's hurrah ashore, singing, dancing, smoking, drinking, and doing all sorts of things.

Jack appeared to have fallen right in with them and was the loudest of them all, and it was fortunate that the place stood as far from the avenue as it did, or everybody,

including the police, would have been attracted by the hubbub.

It was Jack this and Jack that, and he was so busy with his old messmates that he never noticed my arrival.

So I took a seat under the arbor outside and watched the doings of sailors ashore.

But I could see that the general laugh was at Jack's expense, and there was a certain amount of guying that some men would have resented, even from friends.

Presently, however, Chin Chin and another sailor man arrived, bringing with them an Italian organ-grinder, they having been sent out as a committee on music.

The company received them with a cheer, and surrounded them with enthusiasm.

"Music, music!" they cried, and hustled the terrified musician into a corner.

One of the sailors spoke Italian, and he assured the fellow that it was all right, and that if he furnished them with all the music they wanted he would probably reap one of the greatest harvests he had ever known of.

So he began to play, sensibly starting off with the sailor's hornpipe.

And those roistering sons of Neptune were just in the humor for dancing it.

Some of them did it first-rate, among them Jack Hawser, who had really become a stage sailor long before he had ventured upon the sensational uncertainties of the tumbling brine.

And who should also jump in but Chin Chin. He was bound to have as much fun as any of them, and having passed so much time with sailors, he felt perfectly at home in their company.

And what a hornpipe he danced with his grotesque costume and wooden shoes!

It will be remembered that Stump developed Chin Chin in the olden days, as did Chips, the original partner with whom we first saw him, and that he became an eccentric dancer of no mean order.

And this was the first old-time carousal he had enjoyed for many a day, and he was bound to make the most of it.

They kept up this hornpipe for at least half an hour, and until the poor Italian organ-grinder's arm became tired, and then they treated him and themselves and then set him to going again.

Sometimes it was Chin Chin alone, with a grotesqueness that made everybody laugh, and sometimes Jack Hawser or Tom Bowline would dance alone.

But, whichever way it was, that sweating musician found no respite.

Finally, however, he got mad, and began to grind out Auld Lang Syne.

Those sailors stopped and glared at him.

"Too muchie; not quickie nough," said Chin Chin, protesting.

"Belay that!" cried Jack Hawser.

"Pay out on the starboard line!" said another, and it was evident that Auld Long Syne was not wholly a favorite.

But Bill Shingle, a good singer, soon got things to working smoothly again by starting that glorious old song, in which they all presently joined.

It was really worth hearing.

And then the organist switched off into Nancy Lee, which took them at once.

Joe Kinghead had a splendid bass voice, and he let himself out on that thoroughly sailor song, the others joining in on the chorus with much good sense and harmony.

This was really getting interesting, and I saw, on happening to turn around, that quite a crowd of outsiders had been attracted, and among them my little old-time friend and hero, Stump, or Frank Slathers.

He came and took a seat by me, but was soon recognized by Chin Chin and several others, and was very soon surrounded, thus giving the organ-grinder a rest.

It was a hearty meeting all around, and for a few minutes Jack Hawser had all he could do serving cider to the party, at the instigation of Stump, and also at his expense.

Stump was delighted at seeing so many of his old friends, and while his genial mug glowed with happiness, he kept them busy with refreshments.

"Now, lads, whoop 'em up again," said he, after they had a rest.

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the old time response, and they were at once wild for fun.

That Italian was encouraged and more vim put into his crank arm.

He seemed to comprehend the situation, and gauged his music machine to the College Hornpipe. Whoop!

That was what all hands shouted.

And then they commenced to dance.

Stump was delighted, and I was interested.

Back and forward, up and down the bar-room floor.

Chin Chin was one of the foremost in the saturnalia.

"Hi, hi, heap hoopla!" he yelled. "Whoopla uppa some moa!"

"Sea room, there! Sea room!" shouted Jack Hawser, as he spread himself on the floor with the rest of them.

"Pay out—pay out!" whooped Tom Shingle, as he also got in.

And they all shouted something as they put themselves down to the music.

"How is that?" asked Stump of me.

"Red hot," said I, and I meant it, for it was getting to be that way thermometrically.

"This seems like old times," said Stump, laughing heartily, and from the expression of his face anybody would have known that he meant it.

It was the old-time Stump again.

But while we were enjoying it, all at once there came an interruption.

Somebody, either dissatisfied, or for fun, hit Jack Hawser in the eye.

Maybe the person thought that such a thing was needed to make the hurrah just what it should be according to sailor ideas.

At all events, somebody hit him, and he went sprawling upon the floor.

The effect was magical.

The music stopped, and everybody seemed to be on their muscle.

Biff—biff! Whack, bang!

Stump and I rushed to our feet.

"Stop it!" he shouted.

But it seemed like interrupting the amusement, and they wouldn't have it.

It didn't seem as though there was a chance for three shakes of a sheep's tail before there was one of the liveliest fights going on that I ever saw in my life.

My friend Stump seemed to think that the thing was going a little too far, and so he rushed in to stop it.

But it would not be stopped.

Jack Hawser was on the floor, and there seemed to be about a dozen on top of him, while the air seemed full of fists and oaths.

Naturally enough, Chin Chin got into it, and somebody pasted him on the nose.

At all events, I remember seeing a pair of wooden shoes in the mixed up atmosphere, and a sorry looking plug hat gyrating through the same element.

It was the strangest thing I ever knew of in my life. Only a moment before everything was lovely and everybody was heated with enjoyment; now they were mixed up like a mess of fish-worms upon the floor, fighting like so many devils.

There was no use of trying to stop it. Stump tried to, but he was knocked end over end, and when I picked him up and straightened him out, he said he had had enough, and with all the voice he had left he cried, "Let her go on!"

Well, she did go on.

Somehow or other the organ-grinder got mixed up in the fracas, and when the organ went up in the air, the last dying notes it gave out were something appertaining to "Finnegan's Wake."

I heard Chin Chin in his anger shout: "Hellie dammie! Me——" and that ended it, for other noises drowned his voice.

Stump and I withdrew.

We voted that it was no funeral of ours, and the best thing we could do was to let them fight it out.

But that Italian, it appears, had got separated from his instrument, and not only that, had been badly abused by those festive sailors who were having so much fun, and he broke away, shouting "police" at the top of his falsetto voice.

I was looking for the "bad man," the old tough who slew at least a hundred Chinese pirates—who had been a pirate and a bad old salt all his life.

But I could not see him, probably because he was underneath of a pile of sailors who were trying to get an imaginary square with him, or somebody else.

Even Stump suggested that the thing was getting a trifle too tropical, and he suggested a departure, but just then a squadron of policemen came upon the scene.

Each policeman had a club, and each policeman pulled his club.

Those clubs were made of locust. The skulls and mugs of that merry-making party were of softer material.

They charged upon them.

I was sorry to see Chin Chin go down under one of the welts given by a minion of the law.

But Stump and I kept in the background. It was safer.

Those policemen proved themselves good ones, and after

a hard fight they marched off about a dozen of them to the station-house.

Stump and I were left alone.

There was nobody but the Irish hostler to take care of the tavern.

We concluded to leave, although Stump said he would be at the police-court in the morning to help them get out.

"What has become of Jack Hawser?" I asked.

"Wait until to-morrow," was his parting, as we shook hands for the night.

I resolved to be there, too.

Well, it was a wild sort of a racket, and no mistake.

But I couldn't help thinking more about that tough old tar, Jack Hawser, than any of the others.

How did it happen that this bad man, who had killed and knocked out his hundreds, how did it happen that he was the first to go down in the little sailor diversion, while those half his size and without a quarter of his reputation were on top?

A person not knowing him would have given the conundrum up.

Well, I laughed myself to sleep that night over the thing, and awoke with a six-inch grin on the next morning.

But I lost no time in reaching the Yorkville Police Court, where the little judge was dishing out justice with an iron ladle.

He was disposing of the simple and solitary drunks when I entered, reserving the Communistic ones for an after consideration.

Stump came in just as the officers were marching out the sorry looking gang and arranging them before the bar.

Of course we could but comment on their general appearance, it was so comical.

First in the row stood Jack Hawser, with one eye nearly closed and a badly swollen nose, no hat, and with a broken-up look generally.

Chin Chin stood next to him, and he wasn't looking much more beautiful.

His north eye was completely closed, his clothes badly torn, and what made him look worse than anything else, his pig-tail had been pulled until it became unbraided, and one of the other prisoners had made a friendly attempt to braid it up again, and had somehow, either by accident or design, braided in a red silk handkerchief quite as awkwardly as the braiding itself was done, and Chin Chin looked badly broken up.

As for Shingles and the others, they were not so badly used. They simply looked just like what they were, sailors on a lark, and they didn't seem sorry, either.

The judge looked at the papers in the case and then took a look at the prisoners.

To save his life and dignity he couldn't help laughing, neither could the officers.

"Well, what ship's crew is this?" he finally asked, bracing his facial muscles. "Who is John Hawser?"

"I am Jack Hawser, sar, if that's the hand you are pipping," replied Jack.

"Well, pay out and let us know what you have to say about keeping a disorderly house and fighting," said the judge.

"Cap'n, it's all false reckoning. I keep Jack Hawser's tavern, as trim and respectable a place as you ever set foot in. I have been a sailor all my life, and only awhile ago settled down on land anchorage. Of course, I like to see my old shipmates, and they like to see me. They came ashore yesterday and called to see me. We had a good time, sailor-like, and in the midst of it in popped these land-sharks on us."

"These land-sharks, as you call them, are guardians of the peace. They say you were all hands engaged in a rough-and-tumble fight. How about that?"

"Why, Lord love you, cap'n, that was no fight. We were just having a little fun."

"I should say so! You have got a right funny nose and eye. What manner of man is this?" he asked, looking at Chin Chin. "You look as though you had also been having some fun."

"Me do. Allie samie like lest bloys," said Chin Chin, trying to smile.

"Are you a sailor?"

"He used to be cook," said Jack.

"Me washie-washie now."

"Oh, you cook and wash, eh? Well, how came you there and in the fight?"

"Glo lon bloys, spect."

"Who began the fracas?"

"Me no. Slomblody sluggie me in lye, an' I sluggie Jack flor hunk."

"Oh, somebody hit you, and you hit Jack Hawser to get hunk, eh?"

"Spect so be. Get plenty hunk. Gettie knockie stufin lout, stan on headie, pull plig-tail an kickie allie lover room."

"You got enough, eh?"

"Heap too muchie. Me lol bloke lup."

"Well, you look it. Which one of you is Bill Shingle?"

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the sailor, briskly.

"What have you got to say for yourself?"

"Well, yer honor, we was all over ter Jack's," he began.

"Yes, so I believe. Go on."

"We are old shipmates with Jack, yer know, an' when we hearn as how he had anchored a hulk away up this way, we thought as how we'd come up an' see him. We hired an organ, an' were havin' a dance, when all ter onct we began ter feel so good that we slopped over, yer honor."

"But who slopped over first?"

"Wal, I guess it was me, yer honor. Boggy, there, he tread on my toes, an' I hit him, or hit at him, and by bad steering got on ter that Chinaman there, an' then, somehow, everybody seemed to get jealous because they didn't get a piece, and the fust thing I knowd things war lively like."

"Yes, I should say so; and you attempted to make it lively for the officer who tried to restore peace."

"Bless your honor, I didn't notice who he was! I thought he had popped in for some of the fun, and I didn't want to see him go away disappointed; so I tried ter make it pleasant for him till he pulled a belayin' pin on me."

"Even then it took two of them to bring you to terms,"

said the judge, evidently pleased with the rough, honest way in which the sailor was telling his story.

"Wal, yer honor, I thought it wasn't a fair fight, anyhow, both of 'em on me with belayin' pins, so I let out all my reefs an' sailed in."

"What ship do you belong to?"

"Ther Robin Hood, yer honor."

"Have you ever been arrested for fighting before this time?"

"Lord bless yer honor, yes, dozens of times," he replied, laughing, and this made nearly everybody else laugh but Jack Hawser, who evidently thought that old Shingle was becoming a greater hero than he was.

"Well, did you pay for your music?"

"No, yer honor."

"Well, you will pay ten dollars for your dancing, at all events," said the judge, waving him away.

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Shingle, hitching up his trowsers and getting down into the starboard locker thereof.

"Chin Chin, you will also enrich the land of your adoption by humping yourself for a ten dollar fine."

"Hellie dammie!" sighed Chin Chin.

"It will be fifteen now to pay for that swear," added the court.

"Me no—me bloke!" he protested.

"Fifteen days in prison, then."

"Hellie dammie, cussie blazie!"

"Twenty dollars now, Chin Chin," and this broke him all up. He wanted to let off some more broken China adjectives, but the prospect was ruinous.

So he eased himself with a sigh and begun to feel for his money with a look that was comical in the extreme.

"John Hawser, you will also be kind enough to contribute ten dollars toward paying for the fiddler, and don't come here again with such a gang or I shall be compelled to douse your glim on the Island."

Jack bowed, but he had nothing to say. The judge hadn't treated him half way fair, for he hadn't given him a chance to tell what a bad man he was, but had brought out all the fun through Bill Shingle.

However, he paid his fine with a sneer, at the same time growling out something about the American eagle not protecting her own.

The others assisted the city treasury to the extent of ten dollars apiece, and they were about taking their leave, when who should step forward but that battered and bruised Italian organ-grinder who had furnished the music for the dancing.

"Stoppa, stoppa!" he cried, at the same time taking the cover from a bushel basket in which there appeared to be a lot of demoralized clock work.

"Well, what is it?" asked the court.

"Stoppa, me ruina."

"What's the matter—what have you in the basket there?"

"Fina organ, breaka, smasha."

"Who did it!"

"Hea—he—heal!" he cried, pointing to first one and then the other of the prisoners.

"So this is the orchestra that furnished you the music, is it?" asked the judge.

They were all silent.

"How did it happen?"

"Hire me playa tuna; fighta, raisa hella, breaka organ an' my heada," said he, uncovering the top of himself.

"Who did it?"

"Alla—alla."

"How much damage did they do to your various organs?"

"Hunder dolla, cheapa."

"Well, I should say so. Gentlemen, you behold the fiddler. You have danced, now pay for your music or I shall hold you," said the judge, sternly.

"Me allie bloke lup!" moaned Chin Chin.

"And so is the orchestra."

"All right, your honor, I'll pay my share," said Bill Shingle, again going for his locker.

"Make up a hundred dollars between you and pay the Italian. But I don't think it will be necessary for me to warn him against getting into another such a scrape."

It was a bitter pill, and only a few of them were willing to admit the justice of "those who dance must pay the fiddler," but they got the money together after many growls, and all hands were discharged.

As for Chin Chin, he wanted to go out into the suburbs somewhere and die. He was very stingy naturally, although he liked well enough to have fun, and this racket broke him all up. It would take three months washing to make up for it.

They all scattered without seeing either Stump or myself in the crowd that filled the court-room, each one going off by himself utterly disgusted.

As for Jack Hawser, he seemed to be a complete wreck, and he refused to speak to anybody as he wended his way sadly back to his tavern.

And I suspect that they all came to the conclusion that they could have more fun for their money further downtown, although they had most likely carried out the racket they started on with Jack Hawser, never suspecting, however, that justice would compel them to pay quite as much for the fun as he had to.

I knew he must be too sore to visit right away, and so resolved to wait, well knowing that he had not observed either Stump or myself there during the shindy or at the court, so, after allowing him time to rest, I knew he would be fresh again.

It was fully a week before I called on him again, and business appeared to be very good. He was bustling about waiting on customers, among whom I noticed the two sea-struck youths whom he had astonished on former occasions.

He greeted me briskly, and all marks of the scrimmage had disappeared.

"I didn't know but that you had slipped cable and gone to sea," said he.

"Oh, no. I have been busy writing up the material you gave me," said I.

"Make a great book, eh?"

"The greatest ever published, I think."

"Well, of course," said he, as he took a big quid of tobacco and sat down near me.

"By the way, what was that I saw in the papers about a fight in your place?"

"Oh, did you see that?" he asked.

In fact, there was a little squib regarding the affair, but it gave no particulars, and of course he felt safe about it.

"Yes, I saw something about it."

"Oh, well, that wasn't nothing much; only a racket with old Tongs."

"Tongs?"

"Yes," carelessly.

"How was it?"

"Well, you remember about how I whaled him some time ago?"

"Yes, you told me about it."

"Well, he came ashore the other day, and hearing of me here, he got about a dozen of his best friends and came up here for the purpose of cleaning me out."

"Is that so?"

"Yes; I knew what it meant when I saw them coming, all whooping drunk; but I didn't want any trouble."

"What about the hand-organ?"

"Oh, they brought one along to furnish music for their cut up. Well, I treated them first-rate, and tried to make it as pleasant as I could, for, you know, I cannot afford to have a row in my tavern."

"Certainly not."

"But finally they got mussy, and old Tongs hit me when I wasn't looking, and then his friends jumped in right lively."

"Good gracious!"

"Yes, but Jack Hawser was here."

"You bet!"

"I had stood nearly all I could before he struck me; then my blood was up. I struck out right and left. I knocked them gully west; I wiped the floor with old Tongs; I swabbed the floor with his friends, and it would have been all right if the police had not come in."

"Too bad!"

"Yes; but I got out of it all right. I was only fined a dollar, and each of them got ten. And you bet they have all had to pay as much more for doctors' bills since the court let up on them."

"Served them right."

"Oh, they had better keep away from the old sea dog, even if he is a landlord ashore," said he, with a swagger.

"Well, I should judge so."

"I am on deck every time."

"Right you are. But I am sorry about Tongs," I said, reflectively.

"Why?"

"Well, I wanted to get a look at the old sea dog, and now, after what has happened, it isn't likely that he will come this way again."

"No, I guess not. I wish you had been here to see the fun," he added, laughing as naturally as could be.

"So do I. It must have been funny," I replied, putting in my regulation laugh.

"Oh, very funny—for Tongs. Ho, ho, ho! Awfully funny for Tongs."

By this time my order had been filled, and Jack left me to attend to other customers, notably the two sea-struck young fellows before spoken of.

I could see that they were exceedingly glad when he

went over to their table and showed them some attention, and it is needless to say they were not present either at the shindy or at the police court, and had heard nothing about anything that could reduce Jack in their estimation.

It wasn't long before he was talking loud enough for me to overhear, and the likelihood is that he intended it for my benefit on account of the book, while entertaining a pair of willing listeners.

"Have you leisure to tell us that story to-night?" I heard one of them ask.

"That's not right, shipmate. Ask me if it's my watch below and if I feel like entertaining the fore-castle with a yarn," said he, correcting the amateur.

"Certainly, Charley," said the other, reproachfully, as though knowing that he had made a blunder in the regulation nautical slang.

Then they both said, "Ah, yes," and laughed their excuses.

"That's all right, my hearties. No, it isn't my watch below just now. In fact, it is my trick at the wheel, but if you don't mind any little interruptions, why, I'll let out a few hunks for you."

"Oh, certainly."

"To be sure. Oh, of course."

"Don't mind us—no, certainly not, only give us the story—that is, yarn—and we don't mind interruptions."

"No, certainly not."

Jack looked anxiously around, as though he felt anxious to be interrupted, but as there was no excuse for it at that moment, he began:

"You was asking me if I ever had any experiences with earthquakes at sea?"

"Yes—certainly."

"Yes, we have read of them."

"Read of them!" sneered Jack. "Why, that is only child's talk compared with a sailor's experience."

"I dare say."

"Yes, undoubtedly."

"Yes, I have been there. Remember reading about the great earthquake off the coast of Chili about ten years ago?"

"Yes, I think I do."

"Strikes me I do, too."

"Well, I was there. We were bound from San Francisco to New York on the ship *Alaska*, loaded with grain, and when off the coast of Chili we fell in with that tremendous earthquake. It seemed as though the ocean was about to throw up its bottom, and turn things over generally."

"Gracious!"

"Terrible!"

These fellows were good listeners, and relieved him at convenient points, so as to enable him to squirt out his accumulation of tobacco-juice and get his wind. And, what was more and better yet, they seemed to believe every word he said.

"There was no wind at all, and the glass was remarkably low, but the force of the submarine volcano created a wild commotion in the water, and our ship rose and fell as though being tossed up and down by some all-powerful monster beneath it. The rumblings were loud and deep,

causing the ship to quiver like a leaf in the wind, and the sky, that had been copper-colored, now became suddenly dark, and we could scarcely see five fathoms ahead of us."

"What a situation!"

"Terrible!"

"Well, while surrounded by this darkness, and all hands from the captain to the boy being paralyzed, we felt ourselves being raised by some mysterious power, as a feather is borne upward on a gale, and very soon came to the conclusion that we were being carried shoreward on the crest of an enormous tidal wave."

"Dreadful!"

"Gracious me!"

"Dreadful? I shall never forget the sensations of that hour! We felt that destruction awaited us, but could not see where we were being carried. Oh, the sensation was terrible! See those gray hairs?" he asked.

"Yes," they both said.

"Well, they come from that; and every person on board turned as white-haired as old men in the five minutes we were enduring that suspense. Well, presently we heard the roar of the waters as they dashed furiously upon the shore, and then we knew that our time had come. Nothing could be heard above that terrible roaring, but still we seemed to be borne along above it. Finally we felt the ship beginning to sink slowly, and in about half a minute we were landed somewhere but so gently that not a timber was strained or a rope broken."

"Good heavens!"

"Where were you?"

"Well, it was some time before we could make out, and then we found that we had been taken by that enormous tidal wave fully a mile inland and set down upon a mountain a thousand feet above the level of the sea."

"Great heavens!"

"Is it possible?"

Even as well as I knew the champion nautical liar, this startled me.

"Fact, I assure you."

"But of course you were wrecked?"

"Certainly, of course."

"Didn't I tell you that we were set down as safely as though braced up in a dry dock. We were not wrecked at all, but rather out of our course."

"Well, I should say so."

"Found yourself without a chart, eh?"

"Rather. But we waited until after the trouble was over, and then got our bearings. The captain was for abandoning her, but I was not. He asked me what I hoped to do with her, and I told him. 'Well,' he replied, 'if you can get her off, you are welcome to her.'"

"I'll do it," said I.

"And did you?"

"Why, certainly."

"How, in Heaven's name?"

"What do you think?"

"Can't even imagine."

"Well, I went to work with the carpenter and crew, and in less than a week we had ways built under the ship and extending down into deep water, after which we launched

her safely, and in ten days afterwards was on our way to New York."

The two youngsters—these would-be sailors—looked at that colossal liar with open eyes and mouths, but they spoke not, and evidently could not.

Jack was just then called away to wait upon a customer, and they were left alone.

But not a word did they speak, and there they sat like stone men.

I had scarcely recovered from the effects of that thrilling narration, and I really began to fear that the youngsters had been struck dumb by it.

I had a mind to speak to them, but, fearing they might regard me as a listener, I refrained.

Finally, however, one of them moved, then the other. They exchanged glances and sighs, after which they slowly arose and made their way out of the tavern without saying a word; without saying good-bye to the landlord or settling for their refreshments.

I could understand their feelings, for I was feeling a trifle that way myself, so I made my way out to the horse sheds, got into my wagon and drove thoughtfully away, although I fear I was neither a wiser or a better man.

I wondered if Jack Hawser could tell the truth if he tried, or if he could tell an ordinary lie.

It should have been called Liar's Tavern or the Annanias Road House, but the concern was far from being a failure as Jack Hawser's Tavern, for in a large city like New York there are always naughtically inclined fellows enough to support a place presided over by a tough old salt, who had been to all quarters of the globe, and seen everything, as Jack claimed to have done, and so as he became known his custom increased.

This was especially the case as regards young men who wanted to become sailors, and who sought information, for Jack was always ready to furnish it in lots to suit.

And when it came down to spinning them a yarn, the reader has some idea of what he was capable of.

But I did not go there again for a week.

I wanted to take Stump along, but I knew Jack would feel under more restraint in the presence of one who knew him so well, and so concluded to go alone.

But Stump and I had enjoyed a good laugh over the Tongs story, which I related as Jack had given it to me.

"Oh, that is nothing for him, but if ever old Tongs hears that Jack has got a tavern, and of the yarns he has told about him, my word for it, you will see some fun," said the little ex-sailorman.

"Wonder where the old sea dog is?"

"Hang me if I know. He may be dead, or he may turn up any time. But you must know that old Tongs is better than a green hand at telling big yarns himself, only it isn't safe for anybody to even hint that they are not true. Why, he threw Jack Hawser overboard from my ship when it lay at anchor in the harbor of Rio Janeiro for accidentally sneezing at the conclusion of one of his overwhelming yarns," said Stump, laughing.

"Yes, I remember, and he has adopted Tongs' style in getting seemingly indignant if his stories are questioned."

"Yes, he has always imitated him in everything but dress, for whereas Tongs is a slouch and usually dresses in

oilskins in good weather as well as bad, at sea and ashore, Jack affects the ideal stage sailor, at the same time assuming to be as bad as old Tongs really is."

Well, as I said before, at the expiration of a week I called at his tavern again for lunch and refreshments, and, although he was glad to see me, he was entertaining a couple of young yachtsmen who had evidently been liberal purchasers for the sake of the experience he was giving them.

How long they had been there I did not know, or whether this was their first visit; but I judged that they had listened to more than one of his yarns, and had come to regard him as a great sailor man.

I judged this from the question one of them asked soon after I sat down.

It was this.

"Mr. Hawser——"

"Jack Hawser, if you please, shipmate. I was never called anything else, and it seems so landlubberish to say mister that I can't take it aboard," said he.

"All right, Jack."

"That sounds like it."

"Well, what I was going to ask you," he began, with a drawl that was "English, you know," very snob English, "was this: In all of your cruisions over the world, have you ever seen a sea serpent?"

"A sea serpent!" exclaimed Jack, with an expression he might naturally have assumed if they had asked him if he had ever seen an eel.

"Yes, those monsters we hear so much about, and whose identity is denied—aw."

"Why, hundreds of 'em."

"You don't say so!"

"Certainly. Common enough at sea."

"Possible?"

"Well, I should say so. Seen 'em two hundred feet long."

"What!" they both exclaimed.

"Oh, come, now, you are kidding us," the other ventured to remark.

"What!" roared Jack, savagely, and they both started back in affright.

"Beg pardon," one hastened to remark.

"Certainly—aw," drawled the other.

"That makes it all right. But you must know I never told a lie in my life, and it riles me, makes me bad, if anybody questions what I say."

"Oh, we beg pardon—we were not questioning you—aw; but—but, I say, did we understand you correctly—did you say two hundred feet?"

"Two hundred feet."

The youthful yachtsmen and Anglo-maniacs exchanged glances timidly, but it was quite evident that Jack had impressed them with his wickedness, and that they were careful about offending him.

"Where was this?" asked one of them.

"In the Atlantic, between here and Liverpool," replied Jack, sullenly.

"It must have been a wonderful sight."

"Well, yes—so it was; but it would not have been particularly so had it not been for what was connected with it."

"Indeed!"

"Did it attack you?"

"No; but you remember, perhaps, when the Atlantic cable was broken?"

"Yes; about three years ago."

"Four years ago last June 17th," said he, striking the table with his first. "I have it in my log—I never make any mistakes."

"Well?"

"You never knew what broke it?"

"No; never heard, that I remember."

"Well, it was that sea serpent."

"Possible!"

"Just as I'm reeling it off to you."

"How was it?"

"Well, that we can only guess at; but when we first sighted the sea serpent he seemed to be having a squirming match with something—either another sea serpent or something else. The ocean was beaten into a wild foam by the struggle, and we could see the immense coils partially above water, winding like a huge spiral spring around something that looked about as large as a four-inch hawser. Well, we watched the performance for fully ten minutes, when suddenly there was a break in the hawser, a loud report, a big flash of lightning, and that sea serpent leaped into the air like a huge string of animated sausages, and fell back into the water dead as a piece of old rope."

"Great heavens, what was it?" exclaimed they, earnestly.

"Well, as near as we could size it up, that sea serpent had come across the Atlantic cable and undertook to have a fight or a squirming match with it. He had evidently coiled himself around it and raised it from the bottom of the ocean at the time we first sighted him, and finally the cable parted, giving him the full charge of its lightning, killing him stone dead as it did so."

"Aw, yes, very likely."

"Wonderful!"

"Well, we took latitude and longitude of the occurrence, and on our way home met the repairing steamer searching for the break in the cable. We gave it to them, and they proceeded to splice it."

"Yes, aw, but what became of the sea serpent?" asked one of them.

"Hang me if I know. We left him floating on the surface, dead, and he probably went down after a while. But that is why I remembered that particular serpent," he added, calmly.

"Well, I should say you would."

"But, at certain seasons of the year, sea serpents are as plenty as eels or flying fish."

"Aw, flying fish! S'pose you have seen any quantity of them?"

"Oh, yes. Saw a flying shark once."

"What!" they both exclaimed.

"A flying shark, fifteen feet long, with wings that measured at least forty or fifty feet from tip to tip."

"Oh, come—now."

"Shipmates, I—I hope you won't be reckless enough to doubt my word," said he, with a bad frown.

"Oh, certainly not, but——"

"But what?"

"A flying shark."

"Yes, a flying shark. What do you landlubbers, who never get out of sight of land in your little dingies, know about the wonders of mid-ocean? Bah!"

"Certainly, aw, of course."

"Where was this?"

"In the South Pacific."

"Gracious! Did you see it fly?"

"Yes, about a mile or so."

"How did it look?"

"Oh, like a shark with wings."

"Well, that takes the cake! Bring us another bottle o' your cider."

"Ay—ay, sir!"

And Jack swaggered away to fill the order.

"I say, Cholly, I"—and he looked carefully around—"I caunt swallow that yarn, you know."

"No, nor I, but it would be deuced dangerous to tell him so. Think of how many men he has killed!" replied the other.

"Yas, he's a deuced bad one."

Well, as for me, I thought I had heard this prince of liars at his best, but I inwardly concluded that I had not, and that he was a genius to whose performances no fixed rules could be applied, and so I left the place and the two amateur sailors with their entertainer.

But, in the name of Annanias and Sophria, what could he or would he tell them next?

Jack Hawser's tavern prospered, and he had many customers who patronized him for the sake of hearing his yarns.

But I refrained from going there so often, for fear I might get into the habit of lying myself.

It was eight or ten days after the events last recorded before I went there again, and possibly I should not have done so then had I not received a note from Stump, informing me that Tongs had arrived in port.

It was very indefinite, of course, and I was undecided whether to hint to Jack that I had heard some of his old messmates were in port, or to say nothing about it.

I finally decided upon the latter course, for of course it would not do to tell him right to his face that Tongs had arrived, after the graphic account he had given me of that worthy's visit at his place, and his consequent discomfort.

But I thought I would not neglect him too long, lest he should get uneasy regarding the progress of his book, or, rather, the great sea yarn in which he was to figure as the one and only hero.

"Well, how is business?" I asked.

"First rate. Been driven to the pumps for the last few days," said he.

"Glad to hear it."

"And I am glad you did not come for more material for the book, because I shouldn't have had time to talk."

"Oh, that is all right."

"By the way, how are you getting on with the yarn, anyhow?"

"Oh, pretty well. Have it ready for the printers in a month or so."

"Good. I want to get it out, for it will be a big help to my tavern."

"Undoubtedly."

"I was talking with one of my customers about it the other day, and he said it was a big idea, and he also suggested that I have the picture of my tavern on the cover, and a regular advertisement, so that people would know where to find me. What do you think?"

"Big idea. I'll see to it."

"All right, and I'll give you a good whack out of the sale of the book. Of course, my share will be the largest, because I furnish the ideas, but if you go on and get it up in good shape I'll do the right thing by you," said he, patronizingly.

"Yes, I think you will."

"Oh, I'm no hog. I don't want the earth. Live and let live is a sailor's motto."

"I believe it. Want me to mention Mr. Slathers in the course of the narration?"

"Slathers! Oh, Stump?"

"Yes."

"Well, I don't know as he would add much to the story. Think he would?"

"Oh, I might mention him as being your cap't'n once."

"Well, maybe. But don't bring him in so as to make a hero of him."

"Oh, certainly not. How about Tongs?"

"Tongs! Well, just bring in Tongs as the worst old pirate that ever gnawed salt junk; how he whaled everybody he run alongside of until he met me; how he came up here with a gang of men as hard as himself, and how I cleaned them all out, single-handed. It will be a good advertisement for my tavern."

"Well, I should say so!"

"Business is business, you know, and now that I have anchored here, I want to make things hum."

"Of course. And, besides, it will serve as a warning for other tough gangs who might be disposed to worry you."

"Right you are, cap'n. Just let 'em read about how I got away with Tongs and about a dozen others, and they will want to give me plenty of sea room when it comes to fighting."

"You bet."

"Hush! here comes Stump. Don't say a word to him about it," said he, as he at that moment saw the individual driving up to his place with his spanking team of bays.

"Oh, certainly not," said I, and he went to welcome his old boss, showing considerable hypocrisy as he did so.

Stump received his civilities calmly, and presently made his way to the table where I was seated and ordered refreshments.

"Ay, ay, sir," chirruped Jack, and away he went to fill the order.

"And so Tongs is in port, eh?" I asked.

"Yes, so I heard, but I have not seen him yet. In fact, I do not care to see him, for he is sure to be whooping drunk the hour he gets ashore. But Chin Chin is very sore after his late adventures here, and I sent for him and told him to find Tongs, if possible, and tell him all about Jack

Hawser. Well, just after I had written you that note two policemen bore past my store a stretcher in which was a Chinaman. I half suspected something wrong, and followed them to the station-house. True enough, it was our old friend Chin Chin, and while the surgeon was fixing him up he gave me an outline of what had happened him.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Tongy," he said, faintly.

"Tongs?" I asked again, to make sure.

"So be."

"Well, how was it?"

"Me flind Tongy. Tongy heap glad to see me allie samie like one glang."

"Well, it *looks* like it," said I. "But if that was the case, how does it happen that you are brought in on a stretcher?"

"Tongy heap glad," he sighed.

"Yes, but how came you broken up in this way? Explain?"

"Tongy belly glad. Treat ginnie five slix time hap."

"Yes?"

"Tongy slo glad slee me," he said once more, after the surgeon had put a strip of court plaster along the bridge of his nose so as to hold it to his forehead.

"Yes, he must have been."

"Blime bly catchie an' standie lon headie—drivie headie lin hattie heap. Then wipie lup floor wid me, allie samie like swabie. Say I was bully glood clook an' Chinaman. Likie me, he say; want some flun wid me, he say."

"Well, you look as though he had it," said I, really sorry for the poor devil.

"So be," he sadly sighed, and then the surgeon said I mustn't talk to him any more just then, as he needed a rest.

"Well, Mr. Pad, I thought so, too, for of all the broken up individuals—all the broken china I ever saw, he won the pot."

"What did Tongs misuse him so for if he was glad to see him?" I asked.

"Oh, that's just like him! Once he gets ashore and full of vile rum, he will serve his best friend in the same way, and, really, without any malice. He is rough by nature, and the way he treated poor Chin Chin was simply a pleasantry with him.

"Eblution of spirits from spirits, so to speak," I suggested.

"Yes. Oh, he's an old tough."

"But of course he was arrested?"

"Well, I don't know. The police said they were going to find him if they could. But he somehow manages to avoid arrest or to escape with a light fine in all his ram-pages. Of course, when his captain wants him, he will probably have to search in some prison for him, that being where he invariably brings up at the end of his spree ashore, and the fines and costs he will have to pay will amount, most likely, to half the wages that will come to him on the next voyage."

"I wonder he is ever shipped."

"Well, once shipped, he is one of the toughest, bravest and best sailors that ever trod a deck. And he is per-

fectly reliable until he is paid off again, when he goes through the same performance."

"Well, he is a tough old sea dog, and no mistake," said I.

"Ship ahoy—a—h—o—y!" came a voice somewhere in the distance.

"Hark!" cried Stump, starting up.

"Ship a—h—o—y!" came again.

"By Jove, I think that's Tongs!"

"What!" I exclaimed, looking around to see if there was a handy exit.

"Jack Hawser, ahoy!" came again, and this time a little nearer.

Jack heard the call and went out to the front stoop, while we drew further out of sight, Stump assuring me that it was really old Tongs, roaring drunk.

"Jack Hawser, ahoy!" came again, and now it was close at hand.

"Why, Tongsy, old shipmate, how do you do? Give us your flippers!" said Jack, going out to meet him.

At a glance, when he came in sight, I saw that it was the old tough. He was dressed in his oilskins and sou'wester, just as though there was a storm raging, when, in fact, it was a very warm day. And his hat was pulled so far down over his bearded face that I could get but a poor idea of his good or bad looks.

"Tongsy, old messmate, I had rather see you than everybody else in the world."

This was said in a low tone of voice, so we should not hear, but we heard it.

"Give us your line, and make fast to your old watch-mate, Jack Hawser," said he, offering both hands to his visitor.

"Avast there, you bloody lubber!" roared Tongs, drawing back, indignantly.

"What! Don't you know me, Tongsy, old man? don't you know, Jack Hawser?" protested Jack, in a pacifying tone.

"Know yer—know yer!" he roared again.

"Certainly—your old messmate."

"Mess—nothing!"

"Oh, that's all right. Come in and have something. Come."

Jack led the way into his bar-room, and Tongs slowly followed, all the while looking around to size up the place.

"This your hulk?" he finally asked.

"This is mine, Tongsy, and nobody more welcome than you are, shipmate."

"Ship—nothing!" he growled.

"Why, what's the matter, Tongsy?"

"Bah! Tongs—me—nothin'! What have you been sayin' 'bout me, you cowardly landlubber—what?" and he sprang toward him as though he meant business.

"N—nothing, Tongsy, only that you was the best man, the best sailor, and the best fighter that ever pulled a rope," said Jack, in a low tone of voice.

"You are a lubberly liar!"

"Oh, no, Tongsy, I always spoke well of you—of course I did," he protested, and now with a whine.

"You are a lubberly liar! You have been telling around how you thrashed me—how you swabbed up yer floors with me."

"No, Tongsy, never! I——"

Biff!

Stump lit out, and I followed at a somewhat safer distance, but where I could see.

There didn't appear to be any further controversy or dialogue.

Jack Hawser went end over end from the blow Tongs gave him, knocking two or three tables bottom side up as he did so.

Then he shouted "Murder!" and Mike the hostler, rushed in to get a piece of it.

He got it right away.

Tongs picked him up and threw him through a window.

That was all he wanted.

Then the irate old sea dog went for Jack Hawser again, and while he was begging like a dog for mercy, he picked him up and flung him bodily over the bar among the bottles and glassware, making a terrible racket and crash.

"Hold on, Tongs! Don't get me mad!" I heard Jack say, as he dove under his bar out of sight.

"Mad!" came an angry growl, such as might have come from an irate tiger, and then we heard a ripping as though somebody was tearing a house down.

"Hold on, Tongsy——"

Looking in, I saw the old terror in oilskins ripping the bar down as though it had been made of rushes.

Then he reached for cringing Jack Hawser once more.

He dragged him out of the ruin he had wrought and then fired him through the order-window into the kitchen with a crash that might have been heard half a mile away.

This aroused the French cook, and he came bouncing out to get a slice.

That cooker of chops and chopper of hash got his slice right away.

Tongs simply knocked him down, and he didn't seem inclined to get up.

Then he continued his work of destruction by smashing everything within his reach.

Where that terrible old tough, Jack Hawser, was, could not be even guessed at.

But Tongs kept on smashing everything, and calling upon him to come forth and wipe the floor up with him.

Finally he found him and had some more fun with him.

Jack bellowed murder one moment and begged for mercy the next.

Here was the man who had killed his dozens and knocked out his hundreds!

What a difference between romance and reality!

A cry of police was raised, and in came the two amateur sailors whom Jack had astonished with yarns of his prowess.

"Lend a hand, my hearties!" he cried, as he pulled himself out of a busted show-case, cut and bleeding.

"Oh, ho!" cried Tongs, and in three shakes of a lamb's tail those two would-be toughs were sprawling amid the general ruin that was everywhere.

"Oh, Tongsy, old man, I——"

Biff!

Jack disappeared through the lattice of his veranda, taking a large part of it with him.

Then Tongs continued his wrecking. He seemed like a mad bull, and went for everything that he thought Jack owned.

The knocked out hostler had in the meantime attracted the attention of a couple of policemen on the avenue, and they came hurriedly upon the scene.

They charged upon Tongs with their clubs, and finally succeeded in knocking him into a state of insensibility, after which they handcuffed him and rested for a moment to examine the ruin that everywhere surrounded them.

Jack Hawser came crawling back upon the scene just as Stump and myself put in an appearance.

Tongs was panting, but he seemed perfectly satisfied.

But Jack was not, nor did he seem inclined to be until Tongs was removed.

"Who began this?" asked one of the officers.

"He did," ventured Jack.

"Yas, I did," said Tongs. "I have wiped out a land-lubberly duffer who has been braggin' how many times he has licked me. I've had my fun, boys, now whoop her up."

"Take him away!" said Jack.

"Will you make a charge against him?"

"Yes."

"Begorra, an' so will I," said the hostler.

"Me, too, by gar," whined the cook.

"All right. Come an' see me. But you may bet your whole cargo that yer'll find me old Tongs all ther time."

"Take him away or I shall be tempted to strike him," said Jack.

"What! Say, peelers, I'm ironed, arn't I?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, let that braggin' duffer at me!"

"Oh, no! that isn't our business," replied the officer.

"Take him away, or I shall forget myself, officers!" reiterated Jack.

"Forget yerself, yer miserable brag! Why, yer forgot yerself when yer went blowin' around how yer licked me, and what a tough sailor yer was. Why, yer allus was rated the biggest duffer that ever stood on a fore-castle," sneered Tongs.

"You are a——"

"What?" and Tongs sprang toward him.

Jack sprang the other way, you bet.

"Oh, that's all right!" said he, now fully convinced that Tongs was harmless.

"Right! Ask Stump what yer are. He knows yer, and everybody knows yer for ther biggest har afloat."

"Take him away!"

"Yes, take him away!" said both the hostler and the cook.

"Come on," said the officers, but they said it respectfully, seeing what sort of a man they had to deal with, even though they had the "darbies" on him.

And after an understanding that at least three different persons would follow and make charges against the prisoner, the officers started him away.

"Jack Hawser, you king of duffers and cap'n of liars, I'm with yer yet!" shouted Tongs. "Yer've got ter lick me or slip yer cable and go ter sea."

Well, Stump and I were left with the others in the ruins.

And such a ruin as it was!
Everything seemed to be broken.

Everything! And that did not exclude the "bad man," Jack Hawser.

Indeed, he seemed to be the worst broken-up thing in the whole place.

Both of his eyes were blackened, and one of them nearly closed. His nose was bleeding and badly swollen; his natty sailor suit would not have been accepted as a gift by a tramp, and altogether he was a sight to behold.

Stump and I approached him after the officers had taken Tongs away.

"Ah!" he said, as cheery as he could, "did you see how I went for him?"

"Yes, we saw it all, Jack," said Stump. "Don't give us any more."

"But you——"

This was started toward me.

"That is all right, Jack; I will finish up the book, and after you and the law has settled with Tongs, you will see a truthful account of it all, and it will all redound to the glory of JACK HAWSER'S TAVERN."

[THE END.]

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